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KHIRBAT MAFJAR. STONE SCULPTURE, II¹

2. DECORATION OF WALL SURFACES

THE dominating feature in the façade of the palace was the gateway. This was set in a massive rectangular tower the face of which was embellished with various sculptured ornaments carved in the masonry, and in many cases picked out by colour. The stones carrying this decoration, except for certain elements which remained *in situ* near the base of the tower, were found in a confused heap of earth and masonry in the forecourt, where they had been flung down by the force of the earthquake that destroyed the building. The pile of debris which marked their position had suffered disturbance at the hands of stone robbers, especially in recent years, and no coherent scheme of reconstruction seems likely to be achieved on present evidence. It is only possible to describe the component elements of the decoration, as they have survived and can be sorted out, without trying to fix their relative positions at all precisely.

Besides the east face of the tower, the gate itself and the lobby or porch which preceded it were both elaborately decorated with carved stone-work, of which a good many fragments have survived. This decoration includes a monumental archway, a peculiarly elaborate system of vaulting, a series of ornamental niches on either side of the porch, and a moulded and carved string course immediately below them. The jambs and lintel of the gate were also decorated with a series of carved panels.

Horizontal Decorated Mouldings

The elevation of the tower was divided into horizontal registers by bands of carved ornament at certain levels. The lowest of these is partly preserved *in situ*.² It runs some 2 metres above the ground round the north, east, and south faces of the tower, passing in under the arch of the gateway to traverse the north and south walls of the lobby until it terminates on either side against the jambs of the gate itself (Pl. I, B).

The moulding consists of a cyma recta and fillet, the latter decorated with a zigzag of lozenges set tip to tip, with trefoils filling the spaces (Fig. 22, *a*).³ The cyma is enriched with a row of stylized flower and half-palmette motives supported on a chain of interlacing stems (Fig. 22, *b-e*). Half-palmettes used in pairs, which are placed with different effect either back to back, as here, or tip to tip, are amongst the favourite motives of the decorators of the palace. Another favourite theme is the lotus flower (Fig. 22, *c*).⁴ It appears in much the same form in the early mosaics of the Dome of the Rock,⁵ and seems to have been borrowed by Umayyad artists from the store of Sasanian decorative ornament.⁶

¹ Continued from Vol. XI, pp. 47-66.

² *QDAP*, Vol. VI, p. 157.

³ Cf. the ornament of the abacus of many capitals in Group A; *QDAP*, XI, p. 52, Fig. 6, *c* and *g*.

⁴ Cf. Fig. 25, *f* (shorn of certain characteristic features); 28, *e*; and 32.

⁵ Cf. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Vol. I, Fig. 260 and Pl. 5, *a*. For a more ornate version, see Pl. 18, *c*.

⁶ Cf. an elaborate form on pilaster capitals at Tāq-i-Bustān (Sarre, *Die Kunst d. alten Persien*, Pl. 92). The outline of the wings which compose the corolla is preserved in the Umayyad form of the motive as well as in

At Kh. Mafjar the only invariable features of the lotus theme are the bulbous heart-shaped lobes at the base of the corolla and the wing-like points of the corolla itself. The

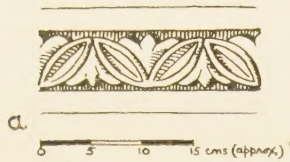


FIG. 22. Gateway and tower. String course

similar motive on a carved wooden panel from Takrit, now in the Cairo Museum of Arab Art, is compared by Creswell¹ with certain motives in the façade of Mshatta.

A second band of ornament consists of the acanthus frieze mentioned above.² Five fragments were found, and these were lying in the forecourt close to the gate. The recesses between the leaves show traces of red paint.

The style of the acanthus recalls the capitals of the lower arcade flanking the gateway, and this suggests that the level of the frieze may have been the same. One of the stones is a corner-stone and shows that the ornament returned for a distance of 38 cm. along the south side of the tower. This would bring it to an end just where the capital of the end pier of the portico would have projected. The function of the ornament would have been to carry across the front of the gate the horizontal line established by the capitals of the lower flanking arcades.

More problematic is a group of some twenty stones and fragments with a vine and acanthus scroll moulding (Pl. II, A) which were found in the forecourt close to the gateway and in the ruins of the porch itself.³ As three of the stones are corner-stones, the moulding to which they belonged must have traversed adjacent faces of at least three projecting angles; some of them, further, were found within the lobby, which seems to imply either that the moulding passed within the archway from the front of the gate and across the side walls of the lobby, or that it decorated some part of an upper room in the tower.⁴ The decoration consists of a scroll, bearing grapes and acanthus

outline of both these elements is always doubled by a groove parallel to the edge, forming a kind of border. Except in Fig. 25, *f*, the flower always rests on a three-lobed calyx with volutes.

Fig. 22, *e*, is another variety of flower, perhaps also remotely descended from the lotus (cf. Fig. 28, *c*, and p. 8 below). It is more frequently represented without the lower pair of volutes. A somewhat

simplified Sasanian versions. Cf. a capital from Qal'a-i-Kuhna, Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, Abb. 30 and 31; or a silver ewer at the Hermitage Museum at Leningrad, Orbeli and Trever, *Orfèvrerie sasanide*, Pl. 48; or, on a piece of silk material in Berlin, Sarre, *ibid.*, Pl. 99.

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 389 and Fig. 487.

² *QDAP*, XI, p. 62, Pl. XVI, A.

³ *QDAP*, Vol. VI, p. 157, and Pl. XLV, 1.

⁴ The first alternative presupposes that the archway in the east face of the tower sprang at a somewhat higher level than we should have expected; the second leaves unexplained the external corners of the moulding. For the present the question where this ornament belonged must be left open.

leaves, which is deeply cut in a torus moulding, surmounted by a fillet enriched with a simple guilloche (Fig. 23). There are traces of red paint on the recessed surfaces.

The scroll is based on a wavy stem, measuring 46 cm. from crest to crest, which gives rise to circles about 19 cm. in diameter. Each of the spiral offshoots from the main stem terminates in a bunch of three grapes, and there are leaves or grape-clusters in the triangular spaces between spirals. Two other stones carved with a similar scroll, in which a rosette occupies the centre of the spirals, are shown on Pl. II, B; they are both voussoirs and probably formed part of the archivolt of the gateway (see p. 6, note 3). The lively

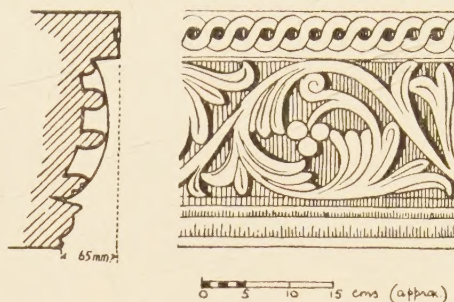


FIG. 23. Acanthus scroll from façade

elegance of both scrolls is apparent even in their fragmentary condition. Based on a good Syrian tradition the ornament is frequent in Umayyad work, as in the gilt repoussé decoration of the tie-beams in the Dome of the Rock and in a stucco frieze from Qasr el Heir el Gharbi.¹ The nearest parallel to our frieze in stone is a scroll which encircles the basket of certain capitals from the Aqsa Mosque² (Pl. II, D).

Hexagonal Medallions

Pl. VIII, C and E, show twelve out of a group of eighteen stones or fragments which were found scattered through the debris before the gate. Reassembled as in the photographs they form a series of three (or more, assuming that some have been lost) hexagonal medallions. Their position on the façade is unknown, but they recall the six-lobed medallions at Mshatta shown in Schulz's reconstruction in the spandrels of the triple arch of the basilical hall.³

The stones themselves vary from 66 to 82 cm. in depth; of this 54 to 70 cm. were embedded in the masonry of the tower, leaving the decorated portion projecting 12 cm. from the main face of the wall. Placed together six stones form a regular hexagon in which is inscribed a twelve-lobed rosette. The centre of each rosette is counter-sunk and the ground divided into twelve fluted sectors. The surrounding design represents twelve arches, springing from minute radiating columns or stems, with volute capitals suggesting a simplified lotus-flower (Fig. 24). The stems emerge from a sort of calyx with three bracts. The arches are surmounted by a guilloche which forms the border of the rosette.

The radial arcade is a motive which attracted the architects of Mafjar, for they made it the principal ornament in the archivolt of the main gateway of the palace (see p. 6,

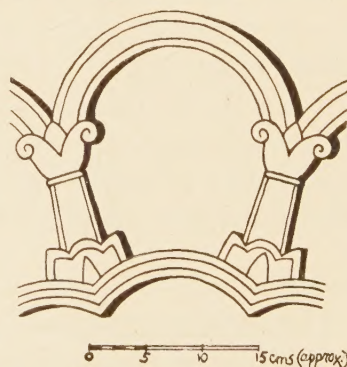


FIG. 24. Radial arcade motive on medallions of façade

¹ *Syria*, Vol. XXI, 1939, p. 348, Fig. 18.

² From the same building, cf. a carved wooden panel of which a photograph is reproduced on Pl. II, C. (Published by Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Vol. II, p. 127.)

³ Cf. Creswell, *loc. cit.*, I, Fig. 739.

below). It does not seem to have belonged to a Palestinian tradition, but was familiar in the decorative art of Mesopotamia and Iran.¹ The spaces beneath the arches are filled alternately with a six-petalled flower and with one or another of a variety of floral and palmette designs (Fig. 25). Of these, *d* is a stylized and rather stiffly drawn palmette; *b*, *c*, and *e* arrangements of half-palmettes diversely drawn; *h* a palm tree, which can

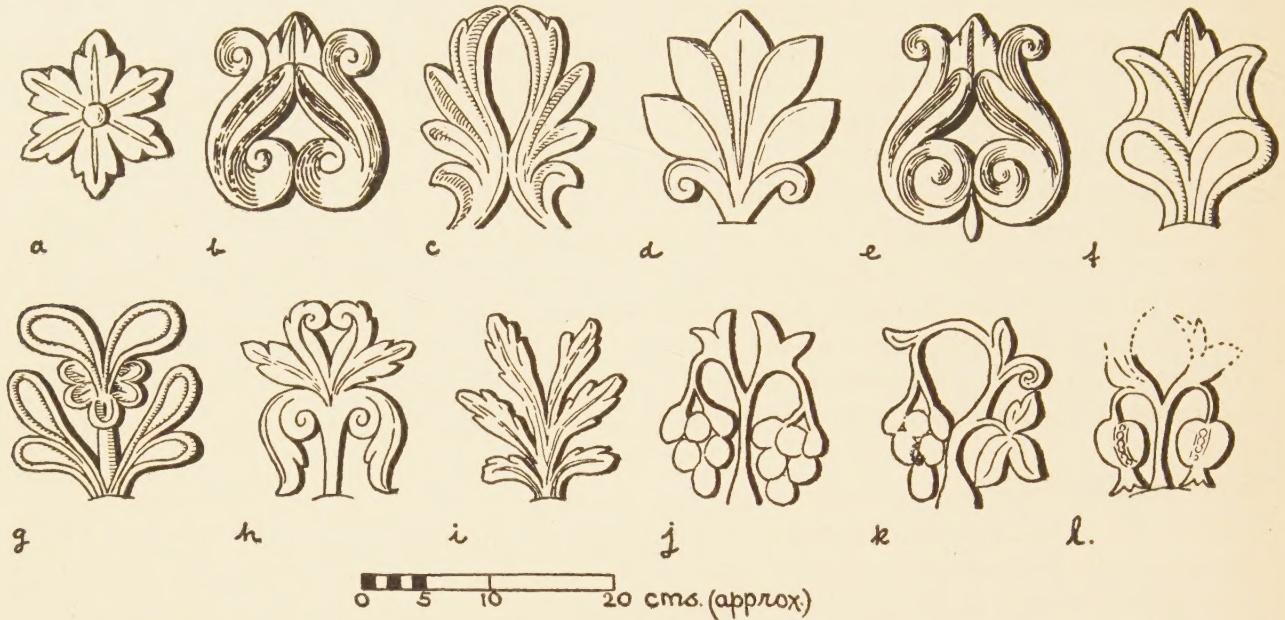


FIG. 25. Motives from medallions of façade

be seen from the volutes to have been based on an elaboration of the same theme; *i* to *l* are naturalistic in detail but stylized in composition; *j* and *k* introduce a theme, the pyramidal bunch of grapes, which reappears in other contexts (cf. Figs. 28 and 31); *f* is the most simplified and least recognizable of the group of lotus flowers (see p. 1 above, note 6); *g* is a composition of mixed features brought together at random to make a fantastic tree: the top two branches repeat the bulbous lobes at the base of *f*; the scalloped collar² belongs to a cornucopia (cf. Fig. 28, *a*); while the two loops on either side at the bottom are simply inserted to fill up space. The pomegranates of *l*, with a row of seeds showing on each, are closely paralleled in the carved cedar consoles of the Aqşa Mosque³ and in a gypsum plaster screen from Kh. Mafjar.⁴

Guilloche Reliefs

The largest group of stones from the decoration of the gate tower comprises some thirty blocks or fragments carved with the elements of two or more varieties of guilloche

¹ Especially in metal-work, where arcading, radial or straight, is used as an ornament in itself, or as a framework for independent designs; cf. Orbeli and Trever, *Orfèvrerie sasanide*, Pls. 64, 67, 45, &c.

² On this motive, derived by Umayyad designers from a classical theme, see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Vol. I, p. 206 and Fig. 252, and Vol. II, p. 131, Fig. 128.

³ Cf. Creswell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 133, Fig. 134.

⁴ Unpublished. Now in the Palestine Archaeological Museum.

ornament. They were found scattered in confusion over the area before the gate. It has not been possible to reconstruct any complete design from the surviving stones, but it seems that they represent the remains of at least four separate bands of ornament displaying two distinct types of guilloche.¹ On Pls. III and IV, A-C, photographs taken separately, to one scale, of all the stones have been arranged to show the main lines of how each type must be reconstituted.

The stones are considerably bigger than the ordinary masonry of the palace. The largest are 70 cm. high and up to 95 cm. long. All these belong to a single type of guilloche. The beds and joints are deep. The ornament is carved on a reserved surface which projects 7 cm. from the plane of the wall face.

The stones are divisible by their patterns into two main groups. The first (Pl. III), consisting of about a dozen blocks arranged in two courses 70 cm. high, makes up a pattern of four-lobed medallions linked by circular knots. This pattern was disposed in two horizontal bands distinguished from each other by the direction in which the knots are looped, the stones of one not being interchangeable with those of the other. The knots and medallions are formed by 'ribbons' decorated with a guilloche of the same pattern as the one they themselves trace, i.e. quatrefoils linked by circles. The ribbons are bordered by rows of circular beads between narrow fillets. Each of the medallions encloses a four-lobed arrangement of acanthus leaves framed by a beaded border. The form of the acanthus varies in detail but is akin to the acanthus on the capitals of the central court and mosque. The circular knots were probably filled by a rosette of some sort. Other spaces are filled by single beads, trefoils, or half-rosettes.

The second pattern (Pl. IV, A and c) is composed of smaller stones, measuring from 35 to 43 cm. high, and consists of a vertical chain of smaller and larger circles, with a rosette in the centre of each. Parallel to this was a straight border of interlacing four-lobed medallions like the design on the ribbons forming the horizontal guilloche. A plain edging outlines the border on either side, and the intervening spaces are filled by a series of hook-like projections from it.

It is clear from the straight edge which results from assembling this second group of stones that they formed two² vertical borders either marking the edges of a wall face, e.g. at the corners of the tower itself, or defining some opening in it.

The position of these guilloches in the façade must for the present be left to conjecture, but there are some points of detail which throw a little light on the working methods and mentality of the builders.

Two forms of guilloche were employed: in the one quatrefoils, in the other circles were linked together by knots. In both the knots are circular. Each form of guilloche appears both in the principal pattern and also in the ornament of the interlacing bands which compose it. The two forms of guilloche are never mixed. That is to say, the

¹ With the surviving stones we are only able to make up isolated straight bands without beginning or end. What we miss particularly are stones to indicate either how they ended, or whether they returned and met each other in some form of self-contained panel or design.

² Judging by the direction of the hooks on the border fragment at the top right side of Pl. IV as compared with the hooks on all the other border fragments. Assuming that all the hooks pointed in a single direction, either upwards or downwards, this fragment must represent the opposite edge of the space defined.

ribbons forming the big quatrefoils and their knots are always decorated with quatrefoils, while those forming the big circles are always decorated with a chain of circles. In this way the ornament of the ribbons corresponds to the pattern they trace.¹ The same parallelism governs the devices which fill the spaces enclosed by the guilloches. Where the big quatrefoils enclose a four-lobed arrangement of acanthus leaves, the little ones have a four-lobed rosette. Where the big circles have a circular flower of many petals their counterparts on the ribbons have circular flowers with as many petals as the space available permitted.

It seems that these carvings were executed before the stones were hoisted into position. In Pl. III, A, the fragment at the left end of the top row is actually two stones which have fallen without coming apart. The joint is fine, but can be seen crossing the guilloche band at the top of the stone. The pattern of the guilloche is discontinuous across the joint and the acanthus leaf below is asymmetrical about it. This could not have happened if the design had been carved in position: it follows that the masons received the blocks with the carving complete, and allowed a slight misfit in the pattern to stand.

Pl. IV, B, shows two stones from an interlacing ornament composed of a band similar to the marginal border of the vertical guilloche.² In Pl. II, B, the same band reappears on two voussoirs and in conjunction with an acanthus scroll (see p. 3). Nothing is known of the original provenance of these isolated fragments except that they were found amongst the ruins of the tower.³

Arch and vaulting

The decorated archway in the base of the tower was the focal point in the elevation of the palace. To complete the description of this arch it is necessary to note the structure of the vaulted porch or lobby of which it was the starting-point.

In plan the porch is a short-armed cross, or a square⁴ with the corners filled by four wall piers. The eastern arm of the cross, opening on the forecourt, was spanned by a monumental arch of which the front voussoirs, like the rest of the tower masonry, had crashed into the forecourt and gateway; about fourteen of them, whole or fragmentary, were recovered. Corresponding to this arch, three others spanned the other three arms of the cross; the inward prolongation and intersection of these arches generated a cross-vault over the central square of the porch.

The ornament of the front arch was carved on two rows of voussoirs, or rather on a row of true voussoirs enclosed by an outer ring of longish stones cut to fit the curve of their extrados (Pl. IV, D).⁵ It consists of a series of radiating niches between colonnettes. A row of six-petalled flowers outlines the niche heads, between which the triangular spandrels are filled by designs based on the half-palmette or trefoil, framed in a chevron.

¹ The idea of a design in which the part reflects the pattern of the whole appealed to the humour of Umayyad artists, as is seen in the plan of Mshatta.

² But not identical. It does not therefore help to fill the lacuna noted on p. 5, n. 1.

³ The two voussoirs of Pl. II, B, may have formed part of an outer element in the archivolt of the main entrance.

⁴ The total dimensions are c. 6.25 m. × 6.60 m., with the corner piers measuring 1.30 m. × 0.80 m. and 0.80 m. × 0.80 m.

⁵ But see note 3, above.

The colonnettes are in some cases fluted, in others covered with an imbricated leaf ornament (Fig. 26).

On most stones the capitals are damaged; those which survive are modelled on the acanthus capitals of the palace itself. Instead of resting on any sort of base the shafts of the colonnettes are bent into a kind of elbow at the bottom and proceed inwards across the soffit of the arch. The contours of the niches are similarly transmitted, so that the arch as seen from the front has a lobed outline composed of shallow arcs (corresponding to the cross-section of the niches) between semi-cylindrical ribs (corresponding to the colonnettes). The use of radial niches as an archivolt ornament was not new to builders in Syria or Mesopotamia,¹ but the idea of transmitting the ornament to the intrados of an arch seems to be original.² Carrying the idea to its logical conclusion, the whole under surface of the stone vaulting in the lobby was carved like the intrados of the front arch, with an alternating series of horizontal ribs and hollows. In each of the component vaults the ribs ran parallel to its axis.

The design and construction of such a vault in ashlar masonry was a complicated matter. Some scores of vaulting stones, having the same profile on their under surfaces as those shown on Pl. IV, *D*, were found in the ruins of the porch. Amongst them were a number from the groins formed along the diagonals of the room by the intersection of the vaults. These stones were cut as true voussoirs in relation to both of the vaults; that is to say their upper and lower beds were each cut to two intersecting planes, one radial to each of the two intersecting vaults.

The lower courses gave little trouble. Here the planes of the decorated soffits, still nearly vertical, meet at right angles, while the beds, still only slightly tilted, form a scarcely perceptible angle of intersection (Fig. 26, *d*). These voussoirs approximate to a cube. But as the vault rises, and as the beds of each course tilt more and more abruptly from the horizontal, the shape of the groin voussoirs becomes more complicated. It is now the two soffits on each stone that tend towards a single plane (horizontal at the crown

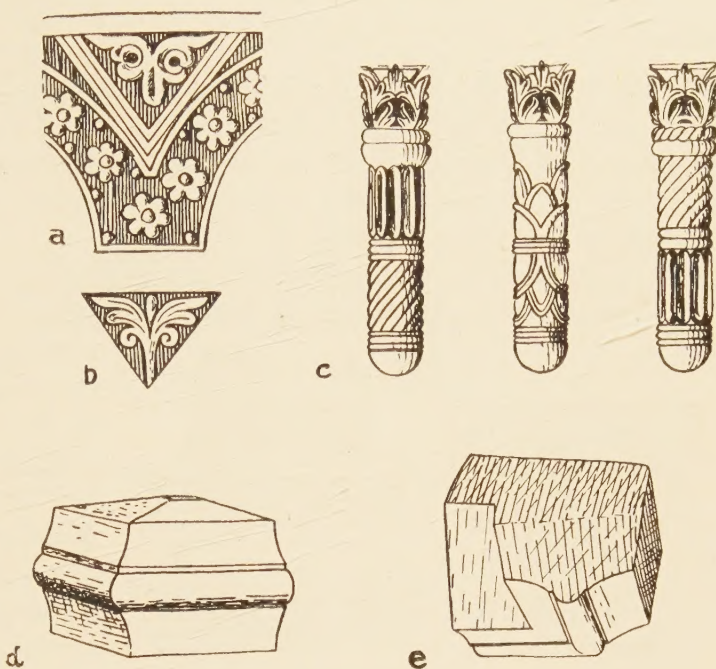


FIG. 26. Entrance vault. *a*, *b*, and *c*, archivolt motives.
d and *e*, groin voussoirs

¹ Cf. the great arch at Ctesiphon, now fallen, and the apse arches at Qalb Lauza, Qal'at Sim'an, &c.

² The scalloped effect produced has nothing to do with the cusping of arches and niches in north Syrian and Mesopotamian architecture, as at Ukheidir and in Abbasid buildings on the Euphrates.

of the vault), while the angle of intersection of the beds approaches more and more to a right angle.¹ Thus along each of the groins every stone differs from its neighbours above and below, not only in the form of its beds, but also in that of the soffit and the ornament upon it.²

Niches

Within the porch, above the level of the string course described on pp. 1 and 2, the north and south walls each contained a row of three semicircular niches flanked by colonnettes with carved bases and capitals, and crowned by quarter-spherical niche heads cut in single blocks of stone.³ Similar niches stood in the inner faces of the pair of piers supporting the outer archway.

Pl. I, B, shows what has survived *in situ* of the niches within the porch.

The colonnettes rest on round bases and square pedestals, the former decorated by

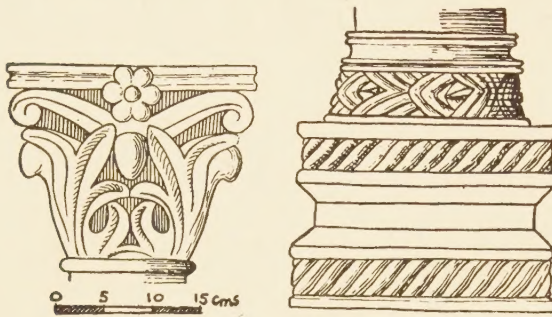


FIG. 27. Porch colonnette capital and base

a wreath of threefold leaves, laid sideways and emerging from triple sheaths; the latter by bands of crudely executed rope pattern (Fig. 27). The capitals, with a half-acanthus leaf on either side of a knob-like stem, surmounted by single volutes with a rosette between them, follow the pattern of the lower front portico capitals in a simplified form. The front of the hood of each niche has a wreath of bay leaves rising

from each side to a six-petalled rosette at the crown (Pl. V, A).

Of the eight original niche heads none has survived intact, but there are fragments of six different designs (Pls. V and VI). Whether these represent six or more niche heads is at present uncertain. The best preserved, A (Pl. V), gives some idea of the richness of the decoration and still more of the dexterity with which the sculptor adapted the design to the curved surface at his disposal.

The level of interest is not constant. The designs are built up either on a geometrical or interlacing framework, or on a vine trellis (D), or, as in A, on a chain of vegetable and symbolical forms, such as the cornucopia. The details vary in the same way. In B and C the design simply encloses a rosette, or a rosette in a wreath, without further elaboration. But in F spare corners are filled with a grape cluster and an exotic lotus flower each emerging, with subsidiary offshoots, from a cornucopia.

Apart from guilloches and different forms of strapwork the motives used include rosettes (three- or six-petalled); pomegranates (Pl. V, A); bunches of grapes, plain or

¹ The keystone, which has not been found, was presumably in the form of a cross. Fig. 26, e, gives the shape of a stone near the crown of the vault.

² Several easier alternative methods for constructing a cross vault were open to the masons. The method chosen is indeed the most logical but was generally avoided by ancient builders, as is pointed out by Choisy, *L'Art de bâtir chez les Byzantins*, pp. 24 and 25. Creswell notes that the intersection of tunnel vaults in any way was avoided by Umayyad architects. *Early Muslim Architecture*, I, p. 410.

³ *QDAP*, Vol. VI, p. 157.

cupped in a foliate calyx with volutes borrowed from a form of lotus (Nos. A and F; cf. Fig. 28, *c*, with Fig. 22, *e*); a cornucopia (Fig. 28, *a*) with twisted horn and scalloped



FIG. 28. Motives from niche-heads

collar; a naturalistic three-lobed vine-leaf, Fig. 28, *b*; a pomegranate on a vine-leaf, *d*;¹ a five-lobed palmette on a heart-shaped leaf, *f*;² and a lotus flower with its calyx elaborated into acanthus leaves, *e*.

Door Jambs and Lintel

Pl. I, A. In the west wall of the lobby was a double-leafed door giving access to the central court of the palace. The jambs of the doorway at present stand between 2 and 3 metres high. The lintel, composed of three stones joggled together with a hexagonal 'keystone'³ in the middle, is complete except for one fragment. Both the end stones have been broken, and it is a fragment of one of them that is missing.

Jambs and lintel are decorated with a continuous series of square panels defined by a guilloche border. The panels display a great variety of ornament. Most of them are subdivided by some form of geometrical or interlacing strapwork (Fig. 29), the compartments being filled by leaf or flower motives. The

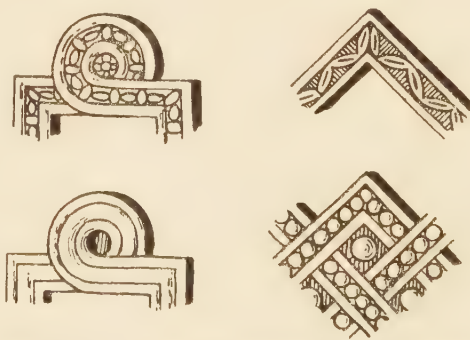


FIG. 29. Types of strapwork on borders

¹ Cf. a carved wooden panel from the Aqsa Mosque, Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Vol. II, Fig. 139. See also the remarks on this theme, *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 187, note 3.

² A device used in Sasanian ornament. Cf. the abacus on the pilaster capitals in Tāq-i-Bustān, Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, Pl. 92. See also Baltrušaitis in Pope's *Survey of Persian Art*, Vol. I, pp. 614-15.

³ Statically the construction of this lintel cannot have been very satisfactory. An excessive strain was laid on the ends of the two outer stones, and was possibly the cause of both being found broken. Probably the lintel was surmounted by a relieving arch, and so carried no extra load.

commonest framework is a square placed diagonally within the panel, making one square and four triangular compartments to be filled.

In Fig. 30 are grouped the most characteristic of the motives used to fill the square compartments. *a* and *b*, based on the six- and four-petalled rosette, are both elementary motives in the sense that they are presented in a direct way, not disguised either by the

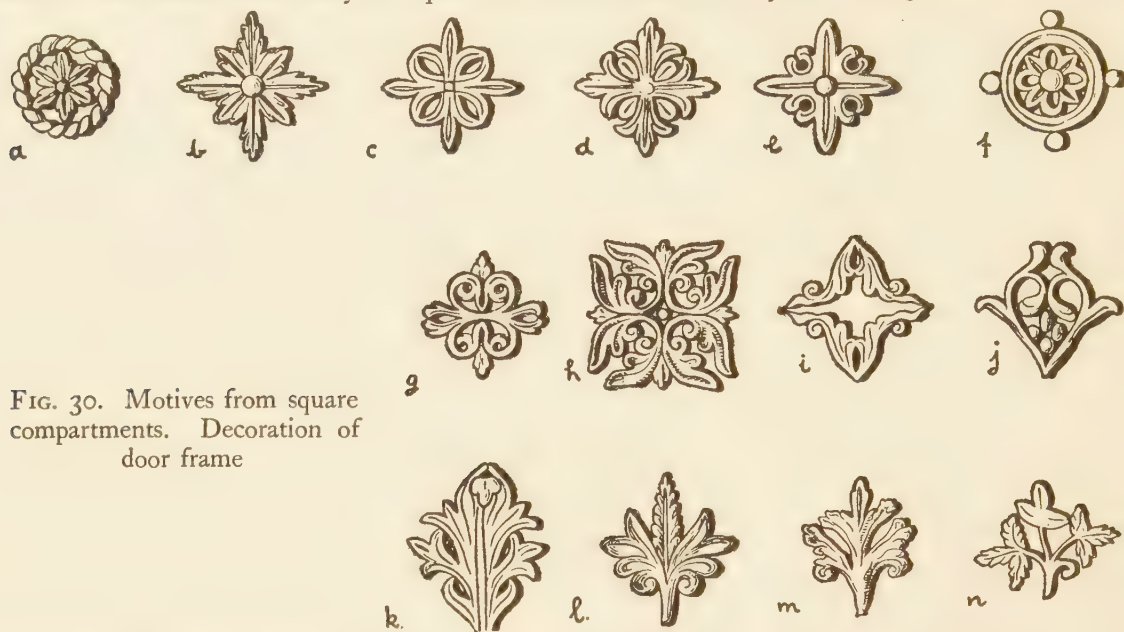


FIG. 30. Motives from square compartments. Decoration of door frame

rope ring which encloses *a*, or the interpolated lobes appearing in *b*. Fig. 30, *c*, *d*, *e*, and *f* show a cruciform arrangement of three-lobed palmettes or fleurs-de-lis. The simplest form is *c*; it is elaborated in *d*, and given a different emphasis in *e*, a version of the motive which appears at Mafjar in carved gypsum plaster and is widespread elsewhere.¹ The characteristic of *g* and *h* is that they are symmetrical about two or more axes and look different according to which you choose for attention. In *h* the pairs of half palmettes can be seen with varying effect either tip-to-tip (as in Fig. 25, *e*)² or back-to-back (as in Figs. 26, *b*, and 31, *k*). In either position they are a favourite device with Sasanian designers.³ *j* is one of many varieties of motive using a bunch of grapes on a stem (cf. Fig. 31, *a*, &c.). Here two figures like 31, *a*, are combined into a symmetrical pattern. Fig. 30, *k*, is modelled on the acanthus of the central court capitals. In *l* a serrated branch is set between two half palmettes to make a kind of tree.⁴ *m* and *n* are both quasi-naturalistic compositions.

¹ Cf. Fig. 26 above; also a carved wooden panel from Takrit near Baghdad. Dimand, 'Studies in Islamic Ornament', *Ars Islamica*, Vol. IV, p. 297, Fig. 4 (in the circular medallions between the points of the central star). Or, in Coptic wood and stone carving, Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. LVI, 1 (in a hexagonal form) and 2 (small fragment middle line); or Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, p. 135, n. 8798, and p. 62, n. 7327. This last example also contains (on the left) a parallel to our Fig. 30, *f*.

² Cf. also *QDAP*, Vol. XI, p. 51, Fig. 5, *e*.

³ Cf. a piece of early Sasanian stucco ornament at Tepe Hissār. E. F. Schmidt, *Museum Journal*, Vol. XXIII, Pls. CLIX and CLXIII, B. Also at Ctesiphon, Kühnel, *Die Ausgrabungen der zweiten Ktesiphon-Expedition*, Abb. 28.

⁴ Cf. the pine-cone and palmette design on a carved panel from the eighth-century minbar of the Great Mosque at Qairawan. Dimand, 'Studies in Islamic Ornament', *Ars Islamica*, Vol. IV, p. 298, Fig. 7.

Of the motives in Fig. 31, *a* to *j* are all based on the vine, using the leaf and clusters of three, five, or six grapes. *k* and *l* are based on half palmettes, with a cornucopia in *l*. *m* and *n* correspond to Fig. 30, *c* and *e*, halved along the diagonals. *p* is a curiously naturalistic flower.

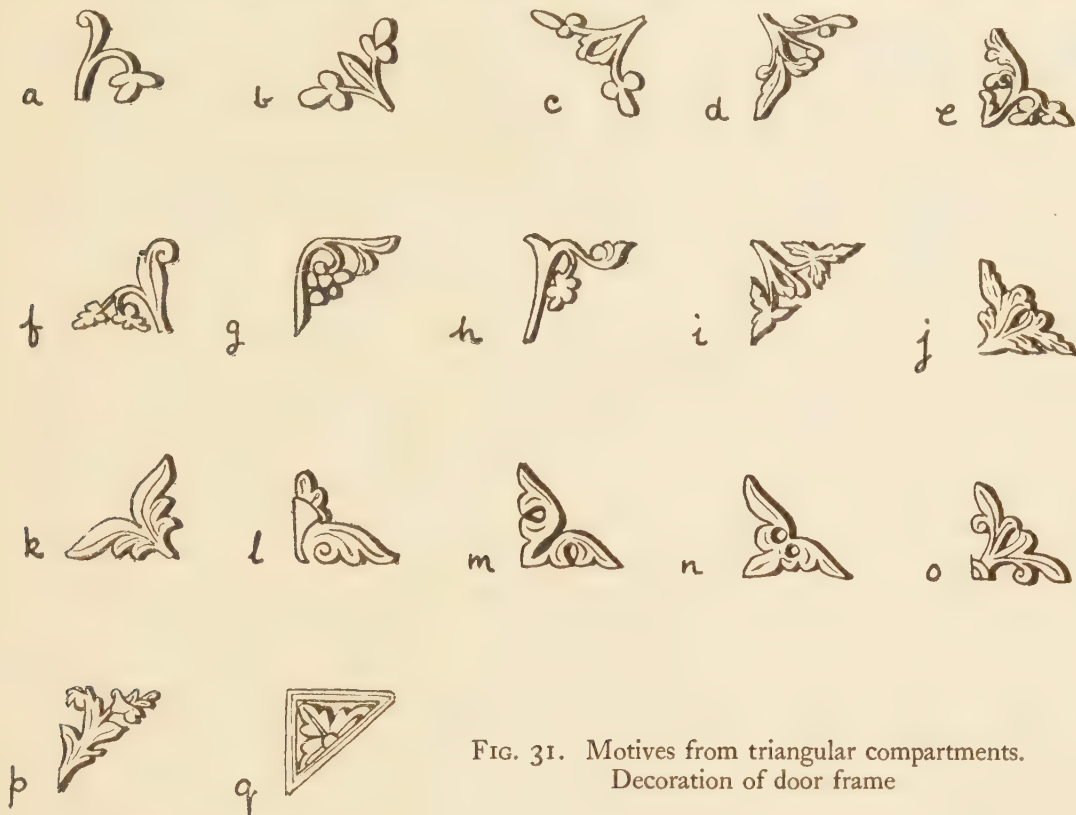


FIG. 31. Motives from triangular compartments.
Decoration of door frame

Window Frame

None of the walls still standing in the palace contain any trace of external windows. But there is evidence that here, as at Mshatta, Qasr el Heir el Gharbi, and Qasr et Tuba, a light above the lintel of each door served both to illuminate the rooms and to relieve the weight on the lintels.¹ In the debris which filled Room IV *b*, however, in the east range of the palace were found the stones shown on Pl. VIII, D, which apparently framed a window. The outline is not circular but composed of a series of convex arcs. The frame is decorated with a chain of interlacing circles which enclose lotus flowers (Fig. 32) like one of the motives in the string course of the porch (Fig. 22, *c*; see p. 2 above). Stems supporting each flower pass outside the circle and after sprouting into a half

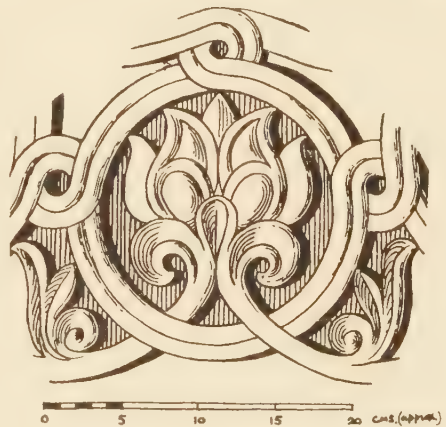


FIG. 32. Window frame ornament

¹ The existence of round-arched windows, perhaps in the upper floors, is attested by numerous fragments of pierced stucco lattice-work set with painted and coloured glass (*QDAP*, Vol. X, p. 158).

palmette probably link one flower with another. The recessed surfaces are coloured red.

3. A TRACERY WINDOW. Pl. VII

Amongst the carved stones mentioned in an earlier report¹ was a group of wedge-shaped stones which were found in the well of a staircase giving access from the middle of the west cloister to an underground 'bath', or *sirdab*, beneath the middle of the western range of the main palace building. The carving on these stones is itself of little interest. It consists of a raised band, 16 cm. wide, decorated with two poor bead and reel mouldings set in parallel V-shaped grooves. Trivial as the ornament is, the structure to which it belonged was one of the most original of the architectural features in the palace.

Altogether there were some ninety-two stones, differing slightly in shape and size, but similarly decorated. All of them had one or more curved surfaces. The proper arrangement of these stones was puzzling at first, but eventually they came neatly together as shown in Pl. VII, A.² The result is a round window filled with a six-pointed star in interlacing strapwork. Both sides of the window show the same design, but with the knots looping in opposite directions. The diameter of the window is about 2.04 m. and the circular frame and star are made up of four different shapes of stone, G and H, B and D, J, and A in Pl. VII, B. The outer sides of the stones composing the frame were roughly dressed and showed traces of mortar, proving that the whole structure was a window built into a wall. The two faces, together comprising the total thickness of the wall, are bonded together by a regular alternation in the depth of adjacent stones.³

The thickness of the wall in which the window was set must have been between 85 and 90 cm. The inner curved surfaces of the star and enclosing frame are clean and finely dressed, showing no trace of any glazing. The fact that most of the stones had fallen into the middle of the west cloister suggests that the window was set in the east wall of the central and axial room on the upper floor of the west range, and looked on the court across the upper gallery.

Though cut in the usual light and porous limestone, the total weight of the star is not much less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons. This was divided, naturally, between the two lower points,⁴ which would certainly have been crushed if they had not been reinforced. To enlarge the bearing surface, the keel-like edge of each of the six points was accordingly furnished with a square cushion running through the thickness of the window from a point 21 cm. from either face.

The geometrical basis of the design is simple. The radius of the arcs forming the outline of the star equals the radius of the enclosing circle. The design results, in other

¹ *QDAP*, Vol. V, p. 136, and Pl. LXXXVII.

² Reassembled and built up for convenience on a low wall. Out of about 106 stones used in the original window, 92 have been preserved and are incorporated in the reconstruction.

³ In one pair of opposite stones the masons made a mistake by cutting the shallow one for the wrong face, the stones not being interchangeable.

⁴ In order to distribute the load as far as possible the builders would have avoided alining two points on the vertical axis.

words, from the overlapping of seven equal circles.¹ The centres of the knots in the star lie on the circumference of a circle of half the same radius. The width of the interlacing bands equals the radius of the knots and is given by the distance from their centre to the middle points of the arcs.

The design is one of those interlacing or strapwork patterns which formed the stock-in-trade of any Syrian mosaic worker. The Mafjar builders may have seen it, but with a four- instead of a six-pointed star, on the floor of a church in Jericho itself.² Considered critically it is quite unsuitable for the position and purpose for which it is here used. The flexibility suggested by the nature of the pattern is incongruous with the rigidity required of a stone structure. Further it simulates a conformation of parts which is structurally impossible, so that the spectator at a distance might wonder how the whole thing held together. In fact, of course, the structural joints cut across the divisions suggested by the pattern, and the star is stable once the four lower points are supported. It is a good example of the effect of forcing a strictly non-structural design into a structural setting. It shows further how the Umayyad masons, with all their technical efficiency, would borrow from another craft, and misapply, a conventional motive which they did not fully understand.

4. PARAPET AND CORNICE

The architecture of the octagonal building which sheltered the pool and fountain in the forecourt is still obscure. Two items of carved decoration, the capitals of the octagon piers, and the archivolt of the main arches supporting the dome, have been described. Two other architectural features can be reconstructed: they are a cornice which crowned the walls of the octagon and a parapet resting upon it. Fragments of the parapet were found scattered round the outskirts of the building. It has not been possible to reassemble any complete section, but the character of the carving and its probable reconstruction are shown in Pl. VIII, A, and Fig. 33.

The parapet was composed of a series of panels separated by heavy moulded posts. Beneath a rounded coping each panel was surrounded by an egg and tongue border, within which it was pierced by an arcade, probably of three arches, supported by colonnettes with acanthus capitals set in pairs at right angles to the axis of the balustrade (Fig. 34). The colonnettes are attached to moulded bases which rest on a plinth forming the lower edge of the panel. The arches are decorated with a wreath of bay rising from either side to meet at the crown. A palmette masks the springing of the archivolt on each side of the middle arch.

If three is the correct number of arches in each panel, four such panels with their posts would complete the parapet for one side of the octagon.

The cornice occupied two courses of masonry. The profile is given on Fig. 35. The fillet at the top has a degenerate egg and tongue ornament, considerably further removed from classical models than the egg and tongue on the parapet (Pl. VIII, B). Immediately below this the cyma is enriched with a zigzag dog-tooth ornament.

¹ A formula which provides a variety of patterns used in the decoration of a group of stucco balustrades from the central court.

² *QDAP*, Vol. V, Pl. L, 2.

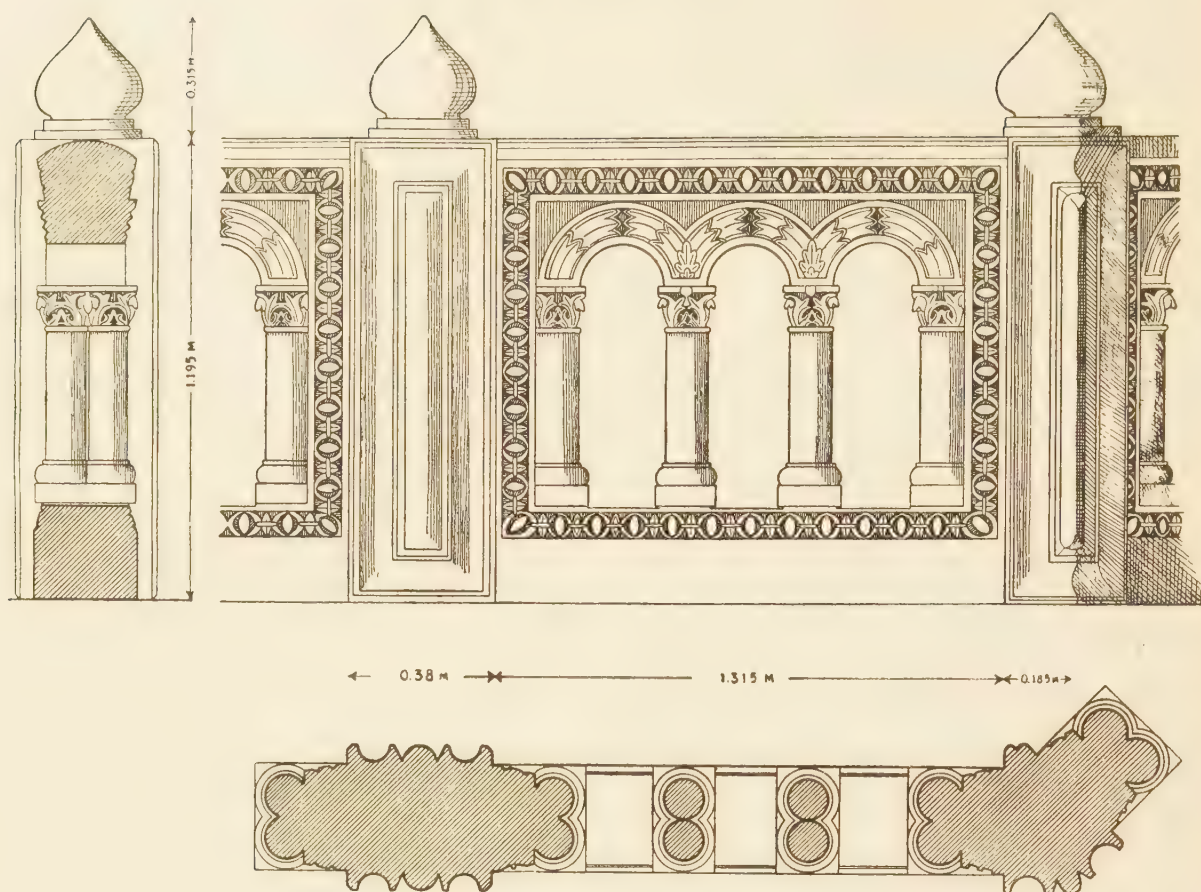


FIG. 33. Octagonal kiosk parapet

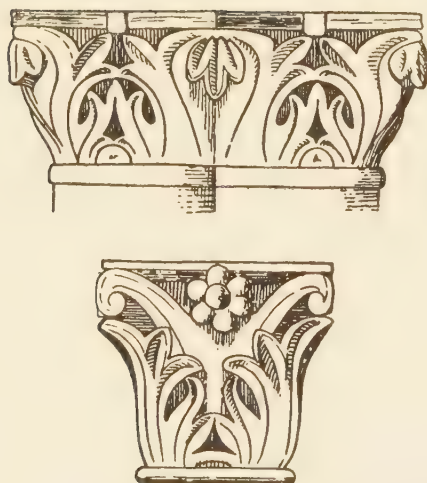


FIG. 34. Types of colonnette capitals,
single and double, from the pool.
Scale about 1:5



FIG. 35. Octagonal
kiosk cornice.
Scale 1:10

The form of the parapet, a series of rectangular panels divided by posts, with their onion-shaped tops, connects it with the chancel screens of Syrian church architecture, but there is no analogy to the arcading in the screens of pre-Islamic Palestinian churches.¹ But there is a second example at Mafjar of the ornamental use of arcades in a series of stucco balustrades from the upper story of the porticoes facing the forecourt and also in the fragments of two marble screens found in the north hall of the palace (see below). The presence of an arcaded balustrade round the octagon of this kiosk recalls the blind arcaded parapet, now covered by tile-work, which skirts the octagonal roof of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

5. MARBLE SCREEN FRAGMENTS

What remains of these screens is shown on Pl. IX. The fragments were found in the north hall and are at different stages of completion.² They give some indication of the capabilities of the Mafjar sculptors for fine work in a harder medium than the stone of the carvings so far described.

On the analogy of the stucco screens of the front porticoes, the completed design in each screen would have comprised two arcaded registers. These are separated by a horizontal band carved with a scroll of vine and ivy leaves springing from an amphora in the centre. The arches were to have been carried on twin columns and capitals, but the work of separating these with the drill and saw had only just begun. A rosette was to fill the spandrels between the arches.

The whole panel is encircled by a decorated border with a pattern differing from that of the horizontal dividing band. The carving of part of this outer border in B is complete. The design was symmetrical about a fleur-de-lis with two five-lobed leaves springing from behind it on stalks. On either side is an alternating series of composite lotus-flower and leaf motives suspended on fleurs-de-lis and linked by stems. The detail where complete is carved with meticulous delicacy.

On Pl. IX, c-c, are lotus flowers, akin to Fig. 22, e, but more elaborate.³ D-D is a more or less original composition of acanthus leaves arranged to form a flower with the usual trefoil calyx. The design on the middle band of the same screen is unfinished. It is a scroll of vine or ivy leaves and pomegranates emerging from an amphora. The second panel, A, shows on the outer border a scroll of ivy leaves and pomegranates with grape clusters at intervals, and in the dividing partition a fragment of a similar scroll.

6. FIGURED SUBJECTS

Representations of human and animal figures both in formal and in narrative settings played an important part in the internal wall decoration of the palace, both in stucco work and in painted plaster. In the stone sculpture, subordinated generally to a more

¹ But compare fragments of a wooden screen from the monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara, in Upper Egypt: Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. LVI, 2.

² See the excavator's report of 1938, D. C. Baramki in *QDAP*, Vol. VI, p. 166.

³ With the imbricated middle lobes and feathery petals, cf. a Sasanian stucco fragment from Ctesiphon, reproduced by Schmidt in *Syria*, Vol. XV, 1934, Pl. VI, n, opp. p. 22. Also a piece of woven silk from Antinoë in Egypt, *ibid.*, same plate, g.

strictly architectural function, figured subjects were rare, but not entirely neglected. Only the scantiest fragments have survived; they are shown on Pl. X.

Bull

Pl. X, A, represents the right foreleg of a bull cut in relief on the side of a stone which was found with several others carrying a bay-wreath moulding in the ruins of the west cloister of the palace.¹ The adjacent face (away from the camera) carries the other foreleg. The animal was straddled across the gable-shaped summit of a rectangular structure which projected towards the central court somewhere about the middle of the west range of the palace building. No trace of the head nor any other part of the bull except the forelegs has been recovered. B is the front aspect of the same stone and shows the ornament which ran round the top edge of the structure and over the pediment.²

Human Heads

Pl. X, E and G, are fragments of acanthus capitals and were found in the ruins of the pool. From the form and scale of the acanthus it is clear that they come from two of the capitals of the octagon, the heads being simply substituted for the usual drooping axial leaf-tip. Apart from the childish crudity of the modelling there is nothing worthy of special notice in these heads except the two methods of representing the hair, one with a row of spiral hooks framing the brow, the other with two twisted strands parted in the centre of the forehead.

Full-length Human Figures

The external ornament of the pool included a series of human figures in high relief. Pl. X, F, is a head and fragment of hair in two pieces, which were found immediately to the south of the building. The stones of C, found nearby, represent part of a head and a torso. The fit between the two is good enough to be nearly certain. A third head is represented by D, which preserves most of the hair and a small part of the forehead.

In each of these fragments the carving projects in high relief from a plain background. The top surface of the lower stone of C is scored with three intersecting mason's lines. The middle one marks the axis of the torso; the second produces the plane of the recessed surface just visible above the surviving left upper arm of the figure; while the third is symmetrical with the second. The intersection of these lines, giving the intersection of the wall surfaces from which the figure projected, shows that it occupied a position on one of the external angles of the octagonal part of the building. The same can be inferred, in D, from the angle of the background to the axis of the head.

All the heads are on the same scale, and the hand shown in H is in proportion.³ It grasps some object of which the rest is lost.

Amongst indeterminate fragments of the same provenance, which are not reproduced here, is one that shows part of a knee and shin. A garter encircles the leg immediately

¹ QDAP, Vol. V, p. 136.

² A number of other stones, recognizable from the bay-wreath and cavetto moulding as belonging to the same structure, have survived, but their reconstruction is still uncertain.

³ Enlarged in the plate.

below the knee. The scale agrees with that of the heads, and we conclude that the fragments belong to a series of full-length figures.

There is no indication of any costume except a sort of collar round the neck of F and the garter on the leg fragment. The hair in each case is represented, as in Palmyrene reliefs, by a series of close-set spiral coils,¹ arranged symmetrically about a parting in the middle. It forms a heavy band framing the upper half of the face. The features were once coloured and traces of black can still be seen, in F, on the hair, the upper lip, chin, eyebrows, and possibly on the eyelids. The lips were red.

The lobe of the ear is pierced, as for ear-rings. The pupils of the eyes are indicated by a drilled hole.

At least three figures are represented by these fragments, all apparently male, and of the same general character. Nothing can be said of their function in the architecture of the pool, except that their position on the outer corners of the building must have been a prominent one.²

CONCLUSION

Although the evidence for assessing the historical position and the artistic character of the sculpture at Kh. Mafjar is not yet wholly assembled, a few general conclusions may be drawn from the fragments already before us.

The essential and broadly predominating continuity of this eighth-century work with that of the masons and sculptors who two and three centuries earlier had built the churches of Christian Palestine is the first and most obvious impression it conveys. That continuity is illustrated by the fine ashlar masonry on which much of the ornament is carved; by the familiar arcaded cloisters, the Corinthian capitals, the niches and niche-heads, and by the chancel-like balustrades of the porticoes and pool. In detail, too, traditional motives are predominant. We still have the acanthus, guilloches, and various forms of interlacing strapwork, the classical vine and acanthus scrolls, cornucopiae, grapes, pomegranates, and vine-leaves in essentially the same forms that had been used three centuries before; likewise, though somewhat debased, the egg and tongue and other commonplace survivals of classical ornament.

Yet while all this is familiar and conventional, there are striking indications that the old themes were used without always being fully understood. An imitator or archaist may easily be led to employ an ornament of which he has a good book knowledge to produce an effect for which it was not originally designed and which it is incapable of sustaining; or he may give it an emphasis in his scheme out of proportion to its inherent interest. This is what, from time to time, the builders of Mafjar did, and what gives the clue to a second characteristic of their work. They inherited a tradition, but they also participated in a revival. This revival, following a period of stagnation and stimulated

¹ Cf. the treatment of the fur on the animals in some of the triangular panels of the façade at Mshatta, and a stucco fragment from Qasr el Heir el Gharbi in *Syria*, Vol. XX, Pl. XLVII, 3.

² Cf. a full-length figure of a dancing girl from the internal stucco decoration of the entrance to the palace at Kh. Mafjar (now exhibited in the Palestine Archaeological Museum); also the busts and figures in relief on the façade and porticoes of the contemporary palace at Qasr el Heir el Gharbi, *Syria*, Vol. XX, Figs. 21 and 25, and Pls. XLV, 3; XLVI, 1-2.

by circumstances peculiar to itself, is, I suggest, the historical explanation of such curiosities as the design of the tracery window borrowed from a plastic medium and applied to a structural feature; the dull and somewhat pointless use of the bead and reel motive in the same window; the enormously magnified guilloche borders of the gate tower, adapted from a minor art and raised to the scale of architecture; and finally the deliberate archaism of the two capitals 43 and 44.¹

If this Umayyad work shows many characteristics of a revival it is far from displaying the mechanical dullness sometimes associated with the word. It had at least two saving qualities, vitality and variety. There was no lack of vitality in the craft that could venture and bring off such a *tour de force* as the vaulting of the palace entrance, or conceive of the entirely original idea of the stone window, or design and carve the best of the niche-heads in the porch (Pls. V and VI). The variety of the work, both in the choice of ornaments and in the freedom of their execution, is obvious enough from the illustrations to need no further emphasis; but one might mention as specially noteworthy the different classes of capitals designed for different parts of the buildings. Another factor which has a bearing on this aspect of the sculpture is the part played by colour. Time has now obliterated its effects, but when we recall that nearly all the carved ornament of the façade shows traces of red, that one at least of the capitals was gilded on a blue and red ground, that yellow and red acanthus leaves decorated the main arches of the pool with painted plaster on the soffits, and that natural tints enlivened the human reliefs on the same building, it is clear that colour combined with form to give to the palace, inside and out, all the gaiety and variety of ornament that the liveliest taste could demand.

It is suggested, then, that the main characteristics of this sculpture are explained by the continued existence of the older Christian tradition in circumstances which brought about, after a period of suspension, a vigorous and prolific revival. There can be little doubt that the presence of foreign craftsmen and the interchange of materials and ideas contributed to the vitality of this renaissance. At Kh. Mafjar the abundant use of stucco, the employment of brick vaults, and the presence of specifically Sasanian motives in sculpture and in wall-paintings² lead us to suppose that Mesopotamian as well as local artists were employed. Some of the importations from Sasanian ornament have been noted, particularly the half palmettes, lotus flowers, rows of beads between fillets, and perhaps the radial arcades and niches. Amongst other ideas probably introduced from abroad may be included the panelled treatment of the jambs of the main gateway, recalling the ornamentation of door-jambs in early Moslem buildings in Iraq;³ the zig-zags of lozenges common to Sasanian and Coptic ornament; and the rows of six-petalled flowers (Fig. 26, *a*) previously used in Palmyrene embroidery as well as in Sasanian stucco.

It is beyond the scope of this report to attempt an answer to the question when or how the revival started. Did it owe everything to the princely patronage of Umayyad rulers,

¹ *QDAP*, Vol. XI, pp. 62 f.

² This refers to a collection of fragmentary and still unpublished painted plaster. See *QDAP*, Vol. X, p. 157 and Pl. XXXIV.

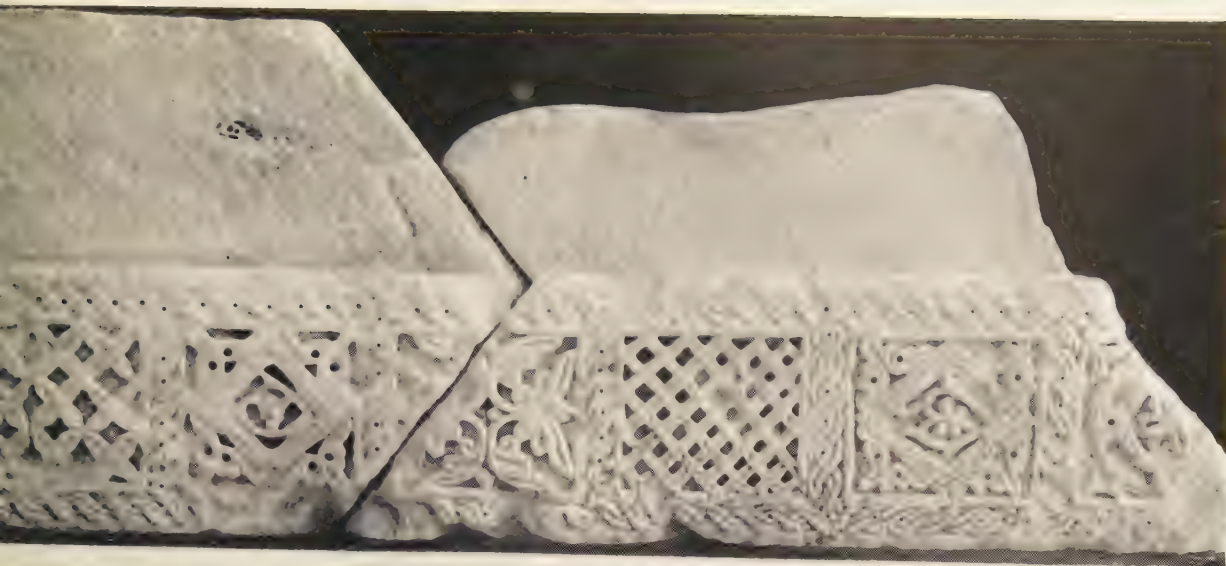
³ Cf. Talbot Rice, 'Oxford Excavations at Hira', in *Ars Islamica*, Vol. I, Figs. 9, 11, and 13.



A

0 10 20

STONE SCULPTURE
A. Jamb and lintel
B. Porch. String course



B

0 50
CM

MAFJAR

ains of niches

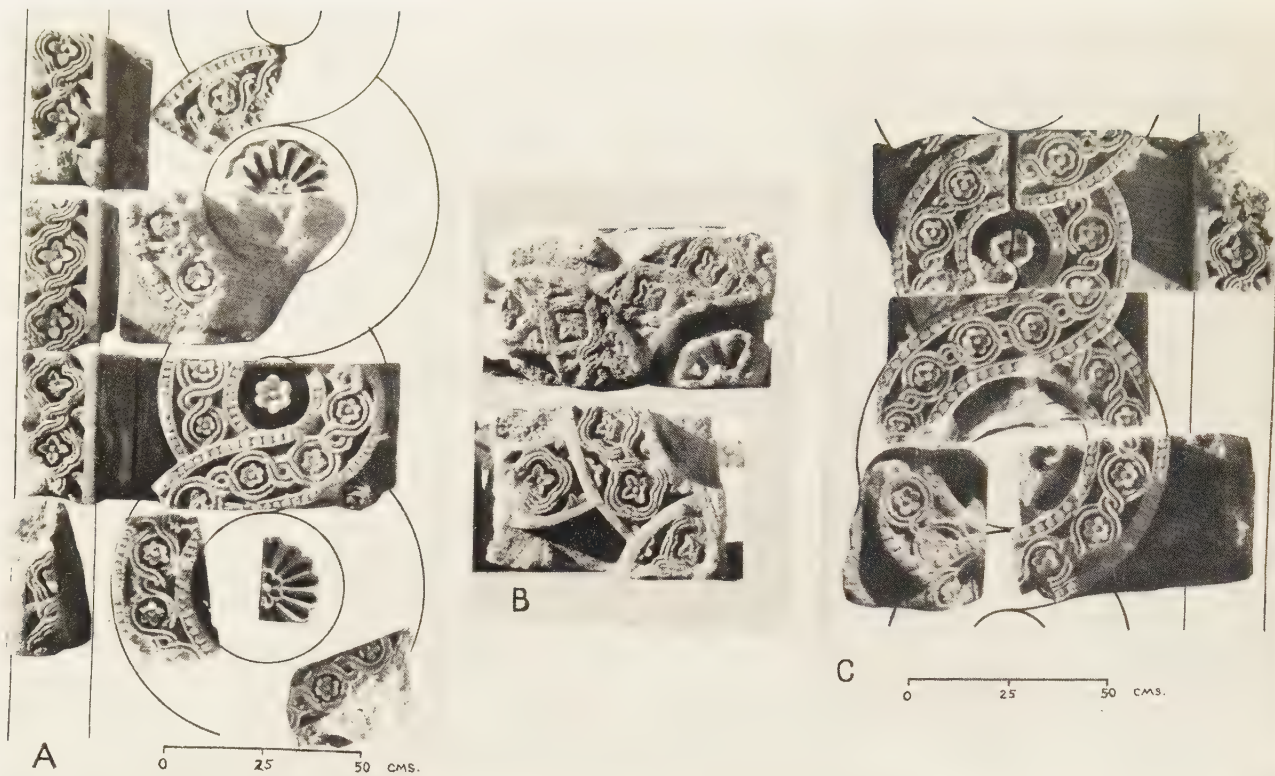


STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR

- A. Acanthus scroll fragments
- B. Voussoir with acanthus scroll and guilloche
- C. Carved wooden panel, Aqsa mosque
- D. Capital with acanthus scroll, Aqsa mosque

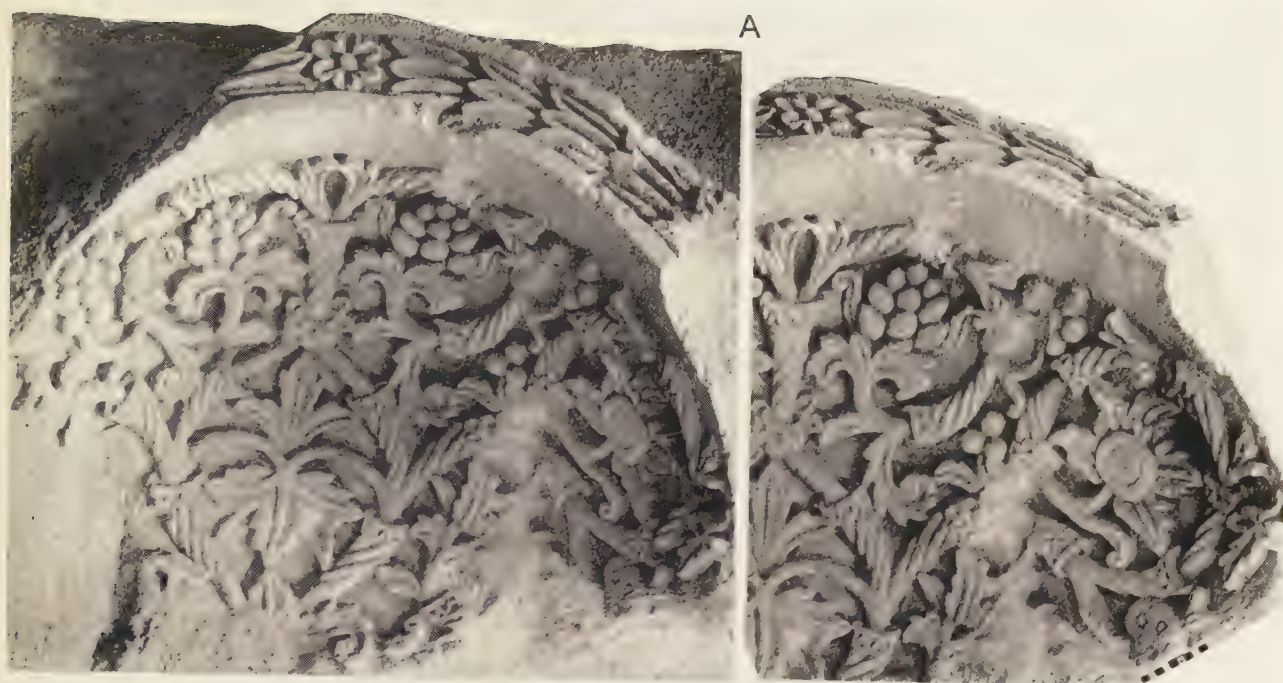


STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR
Horizontal guilloche reliefs from façade



STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR

- A and C. Vertical guilloche reliefs
- B. Interlacing fragment from façade
- D. Fragments from archivolt of gateway



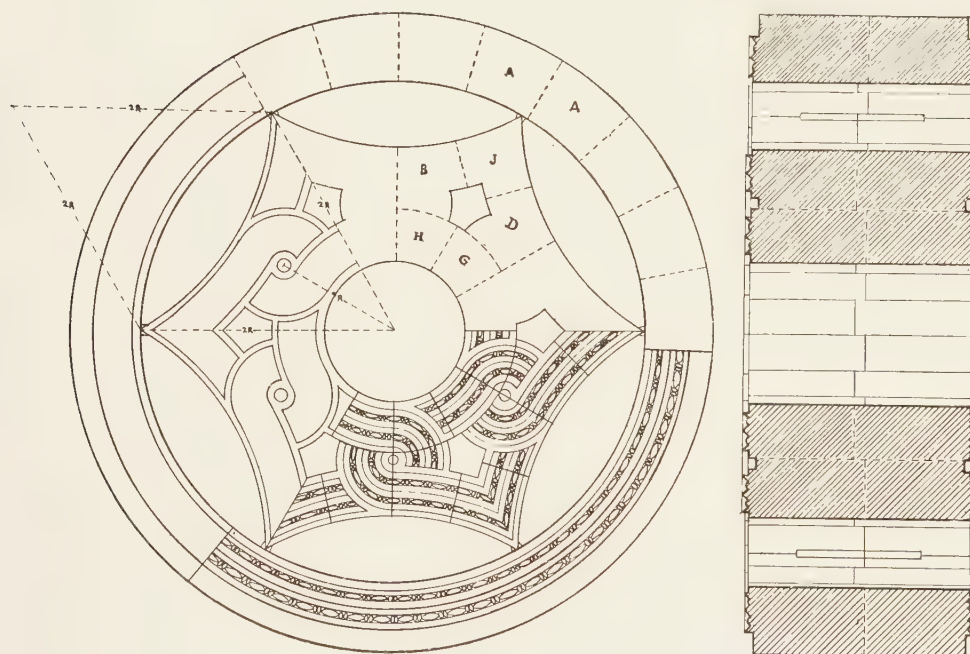
STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR
Niche-head fragments



STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR
Niche-head fragments



A

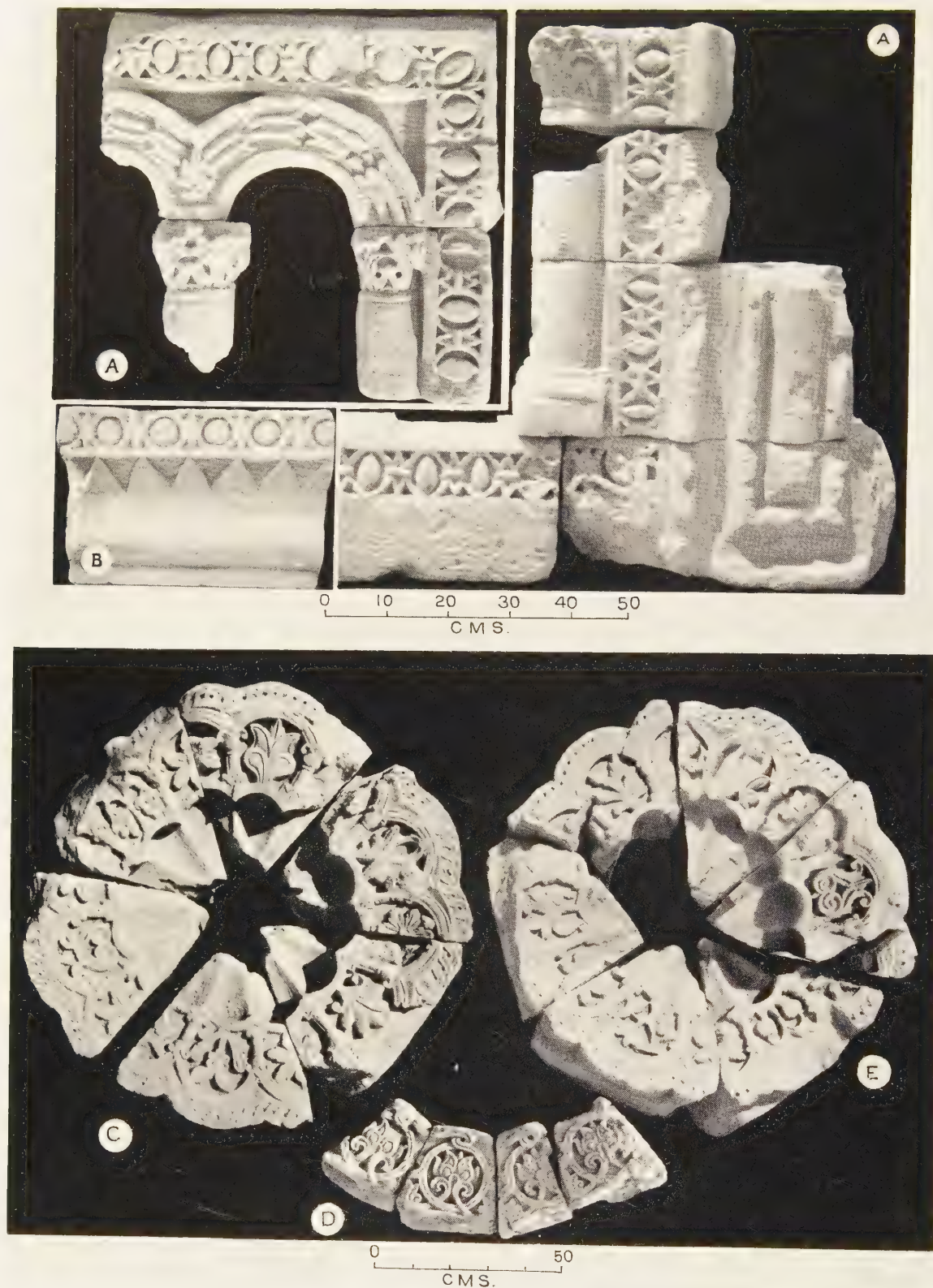


B



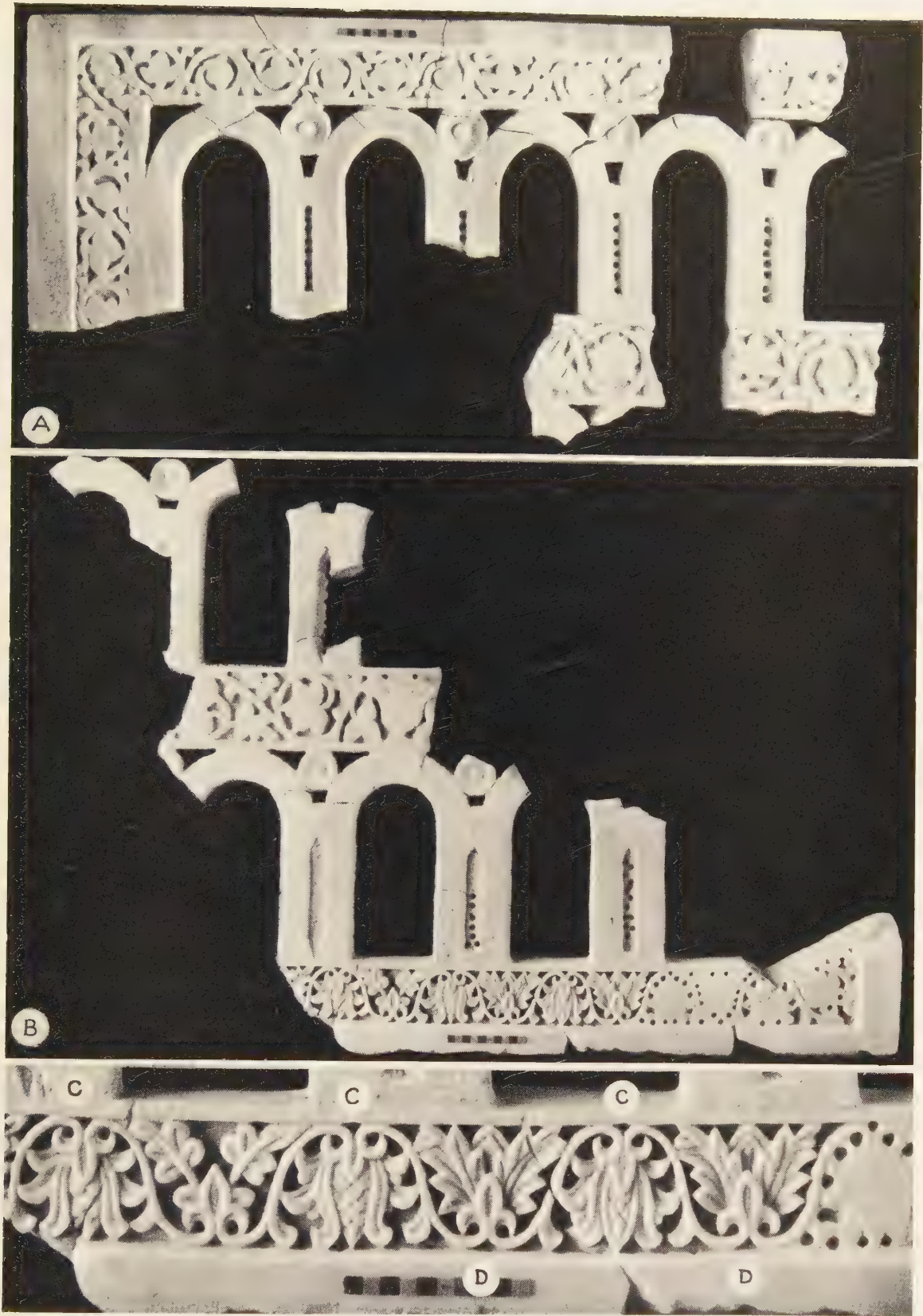
STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR

- A. Reassembled tracery window
- B. Elevation and cross-section



STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR

- A. Fragments of arcaded parapet from kiosk
 B. Cornice fragment from same
 C and E. Hexagonal medallions
 D. Part of window frame



STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR
Marble screen fragments



0 20
CMS.

Scale for F

0 25
CMS.

Scale for C, D.

A, B, E, G, H one scale.

STONE SCULPTURE, KH. MAFJAR

Figured subjects

or was it already in motion when Modestus rebuilt the Anastasis and Martyrium of Constantine at Jerusalem after the burning of A.D. 614? Undoubtedly the Umayyad régime provided political conditions favourable to that interchange of ideas which contributed to the vitality of the movement, while the lavish tastes and abundant patronage of the Arab ruling class in all probability encouraged the qualities of enterprise, experiment, and individual enthusiasm which appear in so much of the work of seventh- and eighth-century craftsmen.

But these may not exhaust the factors at work. Certain buildings, not necessarily of Umayyad date, seem to have shared in the revival, and must be taken into account. Who built the Golden Gate? What remains are still to be seen of Modestus' buildings? By whom were the Council mosaics in the Church of the Nativity made?¹ What is the true origin of the capitals and of some of the sculptured woodwork from the old Aqşa Mosque? Until chance or research throws more certain light on these still problematic but essential questions the development of Umayyad art in Palestine will remain in part obscure.

R. W. HAMILTON.

¹ See the article on this subject by H. Stern, 'Les représentations des conciles dans l'église de la Nativité à Bethléem', *Byzantion*, t. XI (1936), pp. 101 ff.; t. XIII (1938), pp. 415 ff.

KHIRBAT MAFJAR. GREEK INSCRIBED FRAGMENTS

THE excavations of the palace at Khirbat Mafjar have led to a group of epigraphic discoveries which form an important contribution to our knowledge of the late Greek and early Arab cultures in Palestine.¹ This article deals with ten out of twelve Greek texts written on marble which I have been invited by the Department of Antiquities to publish. I hope later to deal with the other two, which contain Christian texts of a literary character somewhat longer than those now published. I have to thank Mr. D. C. Baramki of the Department of Antiquities for his kindness in supplying me with the information relevant to these texts.²

The date of the texts is fixed by the Arabic inscription published by Mr. Baramki,³ according to which the Mafjar palace was built under the Caliph Hishām (A.D. 724-43). The construction was obviously interrupted by an earthquake.⁴

The unfinished construction shows traces of later buildings such as intrusive walls and rooms containing twelfth-century pottery.⁴ It should be also noted that the marble fragments with Greek and Arabic writing were found together.

The texts published here are: Nos. I and II, two inscriptions beginning with the formula ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ θεοῦ, but whose further contents or general tenor cannot be ascertained; Nos. III and IV, two small fragments, of which the former contains two names, the latter part of a sentence whose meaning is obscure; No. V is a playful curse on one labourer by an unknown colleague; Nos. VI and VII are two bills, the first concerning food, the second for building materials. No. VIII deals with the purchase (?) of nails required for the building. No. IX is a small and indeterminate fragment of writing. No. X has a few letters in the so-called Slavonic uncial script.

In view of the circumstances of the find, there can be no doubt that Christians and Moslems were employed together on the construction of this Umayyad palace. Christian and Moslem names are painted on the walls of the Western block.⁵ Among the masons' marks⁶ are some signs resembling the Greek letters Θ and Α. The texts here published conform with this view.

The names are Graeco-Christian, such as Μιχαῖλος (III), Θεόφιλος (III, VIII), Ἰμμανουήλ (V), Ἀναστάσιος, Ὀνόριος (VII). Διδάλλος (V) may be Moslem. It is not impossible that there was a Jew among the workmen: cf. the commentary on Nos. III and V. Nos. I, II, and one of the monogrammatic signatures on No. VII, contain crosses. Nos. VII, X, and the unpublished texts seem to point to the fact that the Christian labourers were well-educated clerics, perhaps from one of the monasteries in the vicinity. In view of the fact that the texts include an account for building materials and another dealing with the sale of nails, we may assume that there were some Christians among the foremen or master-builders. The Greek used does not differ from the late κοινή of Palestine and Egypt, such as we see in inscriptions and papyri. One interesting

¹ For the circumstances of discovery, cf. *QDAP*, VIII, p. 51 f.

² I have also to thank Mr. M. Avi-Yonah for translating my manuscript into English and for valuable advice on several points.

³ *QDAP*, VIII, p. 51 f.

⁴ *Ibid.* VI, p. 167.

⁵ *Ibid.* VI, p. 164.

⁶ *Ibid.* V, p. 137, Fig. 3.

but apparently accidental result of our study is that some of the texts prove the existence of Ionic elements in this late κοινή (cf. Nos. VI and VII).

The texts are written on marble slabs in ink, probably of the same kind as was used in writing on papyrus. The script on most of the stones is a late cursive and in many respects resembles that of contemporary business papyri. The use of cursive script in Palestine is already attested by a contract made at Ascalon in A.D. 359.¹ Other examples of this script occur among the Nessana ('Auja el Hafir) papyri, including one published by the present writer.² The abbreviations, too, are those commonly in use at the period of this palace, viz. the first half of the eighth century. The majuscules of No. IV do not weaken this conclusion: such script may well occur at the period. Only No. X might be considered doubtful chronologically. The so-called 'Slavonic' uncials might be attributed to the period of later occupation, viz. the twelfth century. But though in its later form this script is well attested for the eleventh century, nevertheless it also occurs in the eighth. It seems most improbable that one single text, found with several others, should differ four centuries in date from the rest.

The material used for the texts is unusual. More commonly such inscriptions are found on papyri or ostraca. Papyrus, however, was probably expensive and may not have been available during working hours. Marble chips, on the other hand, and wasters from the floors or panelling of the walls would always have been handy. It is obvious that these chips are not part of the clerk of works' archives. More probably they were used as a convenient scribbling material for the provisional accounts or receipts, which would often have been needed in the course of the construction.

I. P.A.M. No. 42. 42 (Pl. XI, No. I).

A fragment of red limestone, with front face, top and left edges dressed smoothly; back rough. It measures 11.5 by 7 cm. and is 5.3 cm. thick. The stone shows a break along the right edge, as is confirmed by the text, which reads: $\text{ἐν ὀνόματι το(ῦ) θε(οῦ)}$ οὐρα[νοῦ καὶ γῆς] and by another hand: εὐπροσω.

Both writers used a well-trained and clerkly script; their writing differs not only in thickness but in several other respects. The ε of the first hand is rounded below; that of the second appears angular. The difference in the hands appears most clearly in the ρ. The ρ in l. 2 has an additional line below.

The second letter in l. 2 is doubtful in the absence of other examples of this hand. The lower part, however, clearly shows a curve following the junction with the horizontal line of the ε, and we may consider the letter almost certainly a υ (cf. also the υ in No. II). The σ after the ο intersects with the very long vertical stroke of the ρ in the first line; the reading is certain.

We cannot establish the contents of this text. The opening formula ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ θεοῦ is well attested. It stands, for example, at the beginning of the hitherto unpublished ἐντάγια among the Nessana papyri from southern Palestine³ (written c. 50 years after

¹ *Berliner griechische Urkunden*, I. 316 = Mitteis, *Chrest.* 271; cf. Schubart, *Gr. Paläogr.*, p. 89.

² *Sefer Magnes*, p. 224 (in Hebrew).

³ I have been unfortunately unable to consult the provisional report of Kraemer in the Congress of Papyrologists, Oxford, 1937.

the Hijra). Our text might be a receipt or an order; in any case it begins with a pious invocation intended to assure divine assistance.¹ What is unusual here is the extension of the formula: the genitive οὐρα[νοῦ] is certain, probably also οὐρα[νοῦ καὶ γῆς]. This Old Testament formula from Gen. xxiv. 3 τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς,² and *ibid.* 7 ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς γῆς has passed into the New Testament and into the liturgy, both Jewish and Christian; it does not present any difficulties.³ I have, however, found no example of this extension among the many documents in the first volumes of Preisigke's *Sammelbuch* which begin in the same manner.

The second line cannot be completed with any certainty, as the subject-matter introduced by the opening formula, cf. l. 1. 1, cannot be guessed from the letters visible: εὐπροσω. We could divide this into εὐ πρὸς ω[- -]. If our completion of l. 1. 1 οὐρα[νοῦ καὶ γῆς] is correct, and if it marks the end of the line, about 9 letters are missing at the end of l. 2. The assumption that we have here a form of εὐπροσωπέω (cf. N.T. Gal. vi. 12)⁴ appears unlikely, unless it is a prayer or a magic text, written for the purpose of obtaining someone's favour.

II. P.A.M. No. 42. 38 (Pl. XI, No. II)

The stone is broken off from a marble slab; its upper edge is rounded and both faces are well smoothed; its right edge is cut straight (as No. V), while the bottom and the left side are broken off. The fragment measures 20 by 7.7 cm. and is 1.8 cm. thick.

[[†] ἐ]ν ὀνόματι το(ῦ) θεοῦ
CH   γ

The text does not seem to have contained more than two lines. Above the υ of the first line one may recognize a sketch of the head of a bird. The second line contains no clue to the contents of the whole. CH could stand for the numeral 208; it might also be the conclusion of a verb ending in -]σι. I know of no parallel to the following sign, repeated twice at certain intervals; the  above it may be the usual abbreviation for ων. There appears to be no writing between the two signs and the second sigla; in any case no remains of letters can be made out in the dark space between them. The sign γ could be the abbreviation for κ(εράτιον). We cannot, however, adopt this reading with certainty so long as the rest of l. 2 remains unexplained.

¹ Many authors have discussed the formula of the divine name. Its origin appears Judaeo-Oriental. According to Bauer, *Griech.-Deutsches Wörterb. zum NT*², 1928, s.v. ὀνομα (p. 909) this use of the formula, though very common in the Septuagint and the New Testament, does not occur in lay writings. It appears without the ἐν in the oath of the inhabitants of Assos in A.D. 37 (*Eph. epigr.* V, 1884, p. 156). Cf. Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 1901, tr. by Grieve, pp. 146 f., 196 f. Cf. also Bousset, *Rel. d. Judentums*³, 1926, p. 309 f. For our formula, cf. *ibid.*, p. 313, Hirzel, 'Der Name' (*Abh. d. Sächs. Ges. d. Wiss.* XXXVI. 2, 1918), and Schürer, *Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, III.⁴ 409 f.

² The Hebrew text repeats before τῆς γῆς the word אֱלֹהֵי.

³ Cf. Judith, ix. 12; Ps. cxlv (cxlvi). 6; Gen. i. 1; in the N.T. Luke x. 21 ἐξομολογοῦμαι σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς (= Matt. xi. 25); Acts xvii. 24 οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος.

⁴ The ἄ. λ. in the N.T. appears also in Pap. Tebt. 19. 12/3 (114 B.C.) ὅπως εὐπροσωπῶμεν. If we have to read ἐν at the beginning (as appears in our judgement unlikely), ἐν προσώ[πῳ] would appear most convincing. This would be a Biblical expression; cf. 2 Cor. ii. 10; iv. 6 and LXX *passim*, and the text would then be exclusively religious in character.

III. P.A.M. 42. 73 (Pl. XI, No. III)

A marble fragment, broken at both ends. It measures 4·8 by 4·7 cm. and is 1·3 cm. thick. The inscribed side is well smoothed, the back is roughly dressed.

The script is the common cursive of the period. Only the M at the beginning shows a more uncial character. The text reads:

Μιχαῖλον ὃς θεοφ

Michael is a common Christian name of the period. The LXX and the N.T. use the form Μιχαήλ; the papyri (cf. Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, s.v.) also have Μιχαήλιος. It is of interest that the name here appears with the Greek termination and is declinable. It could perhaps be inferred that Greek was the normal language of the person named.

The two extant words do not indicate the contents of this short sentence, probably written all in one line. The two last letters of the second word are not quite clear. θ is certain and also the equally high ε, with the wide upward stroke characteristic of this cursive script. The almost vertical stroke which issues directly from the following ο is difficult to explain. Perhaps it belongs to the remains of the following φ, which is also not certain. A possible reading would be Θεόφ[ιλος] or Θεόφ[ιλον], a name common at the period among Christians and Jews.¹ A Theophilos occurs on another Mafjar text, viz. No. VIII, p. 28. If this conjecture is correct, we have here the names of two workmen engaged on the palace construction.

IV. P.A.M. 42. 63 (Pl. XI, No. IV)

Marble fragment broken on all four sides and measuring 8·5 by 4·2 cm.; 1·6 cm. thick.

It contains the remains of two lines written in a remarkable majuscule hand; only the O in the first line is smaller than the other letters.² The following K³ does not allow us to read Δ. We read:

MINOKEΘH

ΛΛ

Line 2 is quite uncertain. ΛΛ is not impossible. The text may be completed, e.g., as follows: ἡ]μῖν ὃ κ(αὶ) ἔθη[κεν. The sense is not clear. The uncial hand shows the writing of a well-educated person who knows how to arrange his text and is used to this kind of script. Uncial script is also used in the monograms of No. VII (see p. 26), one of which proves by its crosswise arrangement that among the labourers or artists employed were Christians trained in calligraphy. The same follows also from No. X, see p. 29.

V. P.A.M. No. 42. 58 (Pl. XI, No. V)

Fragment (13·5 by 4·5 cm.; 1·6 cm. thick) of a strip of marble leading or edging for a panel. The upper (i.e. originally the front) edge is diagonally fluted. The left end is broken, the right cut diagonally to converge in a point with the lower edge. The

¹ For a Jew Theophilos at a later date (A.D. 850–60), cf. Neubauer, *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, II, p. 121 (in מגילת תופילי in the form תופילי, cf. J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 118).

² What seems to be the diagonal stroke of an α is in reality a vein in the marble.

³ With an abbreviation mark, cf. Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations*, p. 74.

beginnings of each line appear clearly and are each at about the same distance from the break. The text is in minuscule with each letter written separately except *ευ* in l. 2, *κι* in l. 3. We read:

Διδάλλοσιμανυ .	Διδάλλος Ἴμαννο[υήλ]
ανευρηχῶσατων	ἄν εὖρη, ἐχῶσάτων
ιφαρμακισαν	ἰ φαρμάκισαν.

'Should Didallos (the son of) Immanuel find (this), let the witch have (him).'

The explanation of the name is somewhat difficult. The form used has no parallel. -αλλος could point to Allah, if we could explain the first part of the compound. Similar forms are found in the papyri, e.g. Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, s.v. Διδαρίων, Δίδαρρος, Διδᾶς (cf. also Paus. 5. 21. 15), a shortened form. Female names of similar construction also appear, such as Διδαρροῦς, Διδίς, Διδούς. A Persian called Διδάλης appears in Aristotle, *Oec.* II, p. 1350^b16. Whether Διδάλλος represents a diminutive is not clear.¹

The letters following the *υ* of the following word are barely visible; they could be *ου*. It is not improbable that the second name was that of the father. If the reading suggested is accepted, the name Immanuel appears here in its Hebrew form, and thus different from the Ἐμμανουήλ of the LXX, N.T., and inscriptions (Lefebvre, *Rec. d. inscr. gr.-chrét. d'Égypte*, 214, 222). It is possible that the indeclinable form was used, but that it was meant for the genitive. ἄν for ἐάν is usual; the hybrid imperative formed from a hybrid aorist εἶχσαν (cf. *Anth. Palatina*, 5. 208; John xv. 22) is, however, remarkable. The third pers. plur. of the imperfect, formed by analogy with the first aorist, occurs in the N.T.: εἶποσαν, εὔροσαν, ἐπίοσαν (cf. Radermacher, *Grammatik des N.T.*¹, p. 91). It should be noted that the writer of this text has correctly discarded the augmentation. *ω* for *ο* occurs in the more popular orthography of the late period as often as *ι* for *η*; the latter appears here in the article.

The subject <ῆ> φαρμάκις<σ>α in the main sentence is certain, although ending in a *υ*; similar addenda to words in the nominative occur also in the papyri. The word is not a common one. Aristotle calls a witch φαρμακίς (*Hist. An.* 577^a13), Aristophanes (*Clouds*, 749) mentions a γυνή φαρμακίς. φαρμάκεια in the same sense occurs in Aristotle. *ibid.* 616^b23. According to Sophocles' *Dictionary* φαρμάκισσα occurs in Achmet. 275. The ending -ισσα is popular with Byzantine authors, cf. γερονσιάρχισσα (Pelekides, *Thessalonica*, p. 78); Hatzidakis (*Einleit. z. d. neugr. Gramm.*, p. 26) has οἰκονόμισσα, λαιμώνισσα, Μακεδόνισσα, Σαρμάτισσα.²

The text is a curse, written by one of the workmen employed on the building. Possibly it was placed after working hours on the spot where the victim was employed, so that he should find it the next morning. Quite possibly the intention was jocular, for the tone is not that of a solemn curse as used in magic. The person cursed is Didallos

¹ Cf. also Dedalus, the shipwright who appears on a gold glass, Vopel, *Goldgläser*, No. 75.

² I am quoting from Krumbacher, *Stud. z. d. Legend. d. hl. Theodosios* (Sitzungsber. d. Münch. Akad., 1892, Heft. 2, p. 269); I owe this reference to my colleague Dr. Polotzky. For the many examples of such feminine forms see F. Bilabel and A. Grohmann, *Gr., Kopt. und Arab. Texte zur Rel. u. relig. Lit. in ägypt. Spätzeit.* (Veröff. aus d. Bad. Papyrussamml. 5), Heidelberg, 1934, p. 240: ἡ Ἑβραῖος ἡ Ἑβραῖσσα, ἡ Τοῦρκος ἡ Τοῦρκισσα, ἡ Ἀραψ ἡ Ἀράπησσα, . . . ἡ Φράγγος ἡ Φράγγισσα, ἡ Ἀρμένης ἡ Ἀρμένισσα.

the son (?) of Immanuel.¹ The latter name rarely appears among the Christians of this period. The fact that the texts found at Kh. Mafjar include a Hebrew alphabet compared with the Arabic² proves that there was at least one Jew among the palace workmen, and there may, of course, have been more than one. But although the name Immanuel might in this case be a Jewish one,³ we cannot be certain on the grounds of the name alone that the object of this amiable inscription was a Jew.

VI. P.A.M. No. 42. 45 (Pl. XI, No. VI)

Marble fragment, 17.7 by 11.4 and 2.2 cm. thick. The upper and left-hand edges are roughly straight. The lower edge is cut diagonally. The slab is broken in the middle and a triangular piece containing the end of l. 4 is missing.

(ὕπερ) ἄρτου μὴ	α	i.e. 'for bread miliaresion	1
(ὕπερ) τηροῦ μὴ	α	for cheese miliaresion	1
(ὕπερ) ἄφροῦ μὴ	α	for small fishes miliaresion	1
(ὕπερ) ὕνου μὴ		for wine miliaresion'	..

Below the fourth line are faint traces of writing, but nothing certain can be made out. It is possible that the next two lines began with the same sigla for ὑπέρ.

In l. 2 the second letter is not clear. The ink is smudged above the letter, and thus the shape of the η (for υ) is distorted. For the reading of l. 3 see below. In l. 4 the form of the υ (= οι) is unusual. However, a tendency to widen the letters is one of the characteristics of this cursive script, as in the flat curve of the υ above the ο in the diphthong of the genitives.

Line 3 needs a more detailed explanation. The only letters clearly legible are the α at the beginning of the word and the ο (with υ above it) at the end. There are two letters in the middle. The first of these has a curve at the height of the line, followed by a high loop which is common in the φ of the period. The right stroke of this loop appears to run to the left below the curved part. After the φ traces of a ρ may be distinguished, similar to that in ll. 1 and 2. The text reads, therefore, ἄφροῦ. This gives a good sense in conjunction with the bread, cheese, and wine in the other lines. The item is for small fishes, as we see from the following two lemmata of Hesychios: ἄφύη: τὰ μικρὰ ἰχθύδια i.e. 'ἄφύη, the small fishlets'. Then follows ἄφύων τιμή: τὸ ἔλαιον, ἐπεὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἔψονται. λέγουσι δὲ Ἀττικοὶ πληθυντικῶς τὰς ἄφύας, ἐνικῶς δὲ οὐδέποτε. λέγουσι δὲ καὶ αὐτὰς ἄφρον διὰ τὴν λευκότητα. I translate only the last sentence: 'People also call them ἄφρός (foam) because of their white colour.' Aristot. *Hist. An.* 569^a29 and Athenaeus 7. 325^b also attest that ἄφρός was a kind of ἄφύη. A fragment of Archestratus 9. 2 shows that the word is Ionic. It appears to have been adopted into the κοινή from the Ionic dialect and to have remained in use there, although it does not occur before the time of the present text; but the use is clear. The nearby Jordan has plenty of fish, especially small varieties the size of sardines or sprats; the name ἄφρός fits these well enough.

¹ It is, of course, possible that the labourer had two names.

² To be published in a forthcoming issue of the *QDAP*.

³ The name occurs c. 1165 at Chalcis in Greece, where it is certainly Jewish, cf. Starr, *ibid.*, p. 229.

The bill is made out in miliarensia. The abbreviation of *μλιαρήσιον*, a ligated *μι* with a *λ* above, has to my knowledge no parallel. The method of abbreviation, however, is common enough (cf. Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations of Gr. Inscr.*, p. 29 f.). The unpublished Nessana papyri have in the *ἐντάγιοι* a similar new abbreviation: *σιμ* or *σιμ̂* = *σί(του) μ(ο)λ(ιους)* or *μ(ο)λ(ιους)*. The silver miliarens (μλιαρήσιον) was the main tender of the Late Roman Empire from Diocletian and Constantine till Heraclius; it continued to be struck till the age of the Comnenes (cf. Goodacre, *Handb. of the Coinage of the Byz. Empire*, p. 192; Regling, *P.W. s.v.* 'Miliarens'). It is surprising to find the miliarens used in the second quarter of the eighth century, years after Abd al Malik's reform of the coinage, and I have to thank my colleague Prof. L. A. Mayer, who has suggested that the Greek term is here applied to the *fls*, the smallest copper coin in Umayyad Palestine. One might perhaps be tempted to advance the date of this text because of the use of the term *μλιαρήσιον*, but the uniformity in script and contents of the whole group of the Greek and the Arabic texts taken together excludes such a possibility.

VII. P.A.M. No. 42. 71 (Pl. XI, No. VII)

The top edge of the fragment is worked, but the others are all breaks. The dimensions are 11.0 by 9.5 cm.; the thickness 1.4 cm.

The text consists of two lines, mostly faded, and of what appear to be three monogrammatic signatures: the third one of these is entirely broken away except for part of a diagonal stroke from its centre which remains at the lower edge of the fragment. The following can still be made out of the text:

χ ψ μ ν ω α
 $\dots \nu^{\circ}$ $\tilde{\mu}$ $\hat{\mu}$ Λ ρ χ ω $\hat{\mu}$ α
 $\rightarrow$ μ α
 μ α

With due allowance for the illegibility of the faded parts of the inscription, it seems just possible to make out the following:

(ὕπέρ) ψάμι(ς) ? μῖ λ' ω . ο(υ) μῖ λ'
 [(ὕπέρ)] νο(ῦ) μῖ λ' ῥαχῶ(ν) ? μῖ α
 'Αναστασίου
 'Ονορίου

'For sand (?) miliaresia 30 miliaresia 30
[(For)] miliaresia 30 faggots (?) miliaresia 1'

Line 1. The ὑπέρ may be regarded as certain; cf. the bill for food above, No. VI. The form ψάμ(η) for ψάμμ(η) is not surprising at this late period. The Homeric ψάμβος has one μ. The ι after the μ is very doubtful; ψάμμη occurs only in Herodotus 4. 181, but even there we find in the manuscript a *v.l.* ψάμμος. If our reading is correct, we have here another sign of Ionic in the late κοινή (cf. No. VI). The number Λ before the ω seems certain, because the second numeral at the end of this line descends equally low,

and has a very similar shape. The initial curve of the ω seems to be joined to it. I cannot complete any word out of the fragmentary $\omega \cdot \delta \cdot \upsilon \pi \epsilon \rho$ at the beginning of the line seems to stand for both nouns as in l. 2, the second also referring to some building material.

Line 2. The beginning of l. 2 is illegible. Even the ν is doubtful. It should be noted that the abbreviation mark above the following σ is not the flat curving ν (originating in a cursive ν) but a χ (cf. Avi-Yonah, *Abbrev.*, p. 39). The abbreviation for miliare-sion, which follows, is also different from the one used in No. VI and elsewhere in this text; the sign ω placed above the ligature $\mu\iota$ does not seem to represent a mere distortion of the usual Λ . The numeral which we should expect to find after the denomination of the coin is also missing. However, above the next word there is a Λ with a more or less vertical line beside it which we may assume belongs to the preceding $\mu\iota$. The scribe had forgotten to put in the number and corrected the omission by writing it above the next word. The vertical line (which cannot be related to the letters below it) was possibly meant to indicate that the Λ belonged to the preceding word.

The next word presents several difficulties. α and ω seem certain. Also the χ appears probable, in spite of its squat form. The first letter can be hardly a ζ ; it is much too small. It resembles a ρ , but without the long lower stroke. $\rho\alpha\chi\acute{o}s$ or $\rho\acute{\alpha}\chi\eta$ (both forms appear in Pollux, 1. 225) stands for a twig or branch, or a wattled fence. In Collitz-Bechtel, *Gr. Dial. Inschr.* 5027 (from Crete), we find $\rho\alpha\chi\acute{o}s$ καὶ φρύγανα: the sense is, therefore, fairly clear; it means 'dry brushwood'. Pausanias (2. 32. 10) uses the word to describe a wild olive-tree at Troezen. The plural form is difficult; probably the reading should be $\rho\alpha\chi\omega$ (written for $\rho\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon$). In any case the word must refer to some kind of material used in building work and supplied for this purpose. This agrees with the sand mentioned in l. 1. We may assume that the two illegible words stood for other building materials.

The monogrammatic signatures are of special interest. One is arranged crosswise and proves that both signatories were Christians. This appears also to follow from the names. The letters used are all majuscules, except the $\delta = \sigma\upsilon$. In the first monogram all the letters are clearly distinguishable, except the lunar C in the middle, which divides the horizontal arm of the cross into two. The name is ANACTACIOY. The A is repeated three times, the C twice. The second monogram is arranged round the N. P and δ are clearly visible. The circle stands for an O (not in combination with the vertical stroke as a Φ). The reading suggested is ONOPIOY. Both names, Anastasius and Honorius, appear among the Christian population of the time.

It is worth noticing that the monograms are not arranged in the direction of the rest of the script but are written in a line parallel to ll. 1 and 2. A third signature below has been broken off; only a diagonal $\diagdown$ is visible, probably the fragment of an δ . For the cruciform arrangements of names, &c., in monograms, cf. Avi-Yonah, *Abbrev.*, p. 33.¹ The use of this kind of monogrammatic signature is attested for the period of

our texts by a bronze coin of Leo the Isaurian (717-41) with the legend Λ  ϵ

¹ Cf. also E. Weigand, 'Die Monogramme des Hyakinthosklosters', *Byzantion*, VI (1931), p. 412 sq.; on the second type, the so-called 'Doppelstabmonogramm', *ibid.*, p. 413, cf. also Id., *Jahrb. d. Arch. Inst.* LII (1937), p. 125 sq., and p. 130 sq.; Leclercq, *Dict. d'arch. chrét.*, s.v. 'Monogramme'.

(Cf. H. Goodacre, *Handb. of the Coinage of the Byz. Empire*, II. Anastasius to Michael VI, London, 1931, p. 135, No. 12.) The two signatories, artisans or overseers, acknowledge the receipt of building materials. The form of the signatures warrants the assumption that they were clerics.

VIII. P.A.M. 42. 35 (Pl. XI, No. VIII)

A marble fragment, 6.3 by 5.7 cm., and 2 cm. thick. The right edge is cut straight, but the other edges are broken. The lines seem to be incomplete at both ends. The text is written in a very clear and well-formed cursive script.

We read:

πῶλησε	n. pr. ἐ]πούλησε
ἀποΔε	ἀπο Δε
✕ τοθεοφιλο .	(ὑπέρ) το[ῦ] Θεοφιλο
γο ^π ονηλῶ	γόμον ἡλοῦ
ε	

Lines 1–2. The first word is quite clear. The ὁ in the middle of a word is not unusual, although the other texts contain no parallel case. In a Christian document from Kh. Mafjar which I hope to publish later we read λῶλῶ. The λ is certain, although the scribe treats it differently in each case. Here he writes it with a long stroke below, but (as far as I can see) omits the high loop above; in l. 3 both features occur; while in l. 4 (ηλῶ) the stroke is omitted, but the loop is kept. At the end of the line and about 2 cm. to the right of the ε there are traces of a vertical stroke.

Lines 3 and 4 are difficult if we consider both lines together. The abbreviation for ὑπέρ, which occurs in all accounts, is certain; it should be followed by a genitive. There is no trace, however, of the curve which should appear above the ο to indicate the υ (cf. II); of course it may have existed and subsequently faded. Close to the ο is a vertical line, drawn thick at the top and running down to a hook which intersects the letter below. This could be an ι, but then (ὑπέρ) τοῖ(ς) Θεοφίλο would be a unique case in our texts of a dative after ὑπέρ. Alternatively the long downward stroke might perhaps be a mark of abbreviation for τ(ῶ)ν. A third possibility is that the stroke is a mark of correction (like that in No. VII, l. 2) and belongs to the first word in l. 4 where a Π has obviously been corrected to a Μ.¹ Turning now to this word, if Μ is the scribe's correction, we must read the first letter as Γ not Τ, and the whole word as ΓΟΜΟΝ. In l. 4 ἡλῶ is certain. Owing to its ligature with η the λ is restricted to a loop. The letters after the ο are illegible. In l. 5 the upper part of an ε can be distinguished. As regards the meaning of the text, ου for ω is common in late orthography of a popular character. As there is no indication of the missing words between ἐ]π(ῶ)λησε and ἀπὸ Δε[it is impossible to say whether they were grammatically connected. The sentence might perhaps be reconstructed as follows: (X) has sold (and Y has received) from, &c.²

¹ This incidentally is another example of the scribe using two different forms of the same letter—a majuscule π here and a cursive one in l. 1.

² πωλεῖν is also used absolutely, meaning 'to carry on business, trade'. Cf. *Orientis graeci inscriptiones* (ed. Dittenberger), 629, 83 (Palmyra).

On the other hand, ἀποδε could be restored as ἀποδέ[δοται or ἀποδέ[δωκε; but this would seem to imply a certain degree of tautology. If δε is to be taken as the beginning of a personal name, Διδάλλος of text No. V naturally comes to mind. Θεόφιλος, too, has appeared before (cf. No. III). The two here may be the same person.

This text contains the first example of the preposition ὑπέρ governing a personal name, probably in the sense of 'on behalf of' or 'acting for' Theophilos. A similar case occurs in an ostrakon of c. A.D. 3 (L. Amundsen, *Gr. Ostraca in the Mich. Univ.*, No. 138): Θοτεύς Ἀλεμ() πλαγματεύων ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρός κτλ.

The word γόμος occurs frequently for a 'load', not only of ships but also of animals (cf. LXX Exod. xxiii. 5 for an ass-load). A γόμος καμηλικός occurs *Orientis graeci inscr.* 629. 87 (Palmyra, c. 2nd century A.D.); *ibid.* l. 16 we also find a γόμος καρρικός.

The singular ἡλοῦ is strange, where one would expect ἡλῶν; but the collective sense of the singular form is not altogether unusual. That many nails were needed for the construction is shown by the fact that plenty were found in the ruins.¹ If we may risk a translation of the inscription the result will be: '..... has sold..... from De..... for Theophilos (or: for Theophilos' men) a load of nails.'

IX. P.A.M. No. 42. 51 (Pl. XI, No. IX)

Marble fragment (5.6 by 2.5 cm.; 1.3 cm. thick). The upper edge is cut straight, but the other edges are all broken. Only part of a line can be seen, with very faint and illegible traces of a second. In l. 1 we see ωΝΚΟΜ *i.e.* ων κομ. The sense is obscure. The second word may perhaps be restored as κομ[ίζειν].

X. P.A.M. No. 42. 47 (Pl. XI, No. X)

Marble fragment cut straight above and to the right; it is broken off on the left and below. It measures 9.5 by 2.8 cm. and is 2.1 cm. thick.

The few letters visible (ΒΩ . . ΒΕ) are written with great skill; the script is one that is common in manuscripts of the eighth to tenth centuries; it is called the 'Slavonic uncial'.² It continued to be used in its later variants until the eleventh century.

The letters in the text represent a draft or calligraphic exercise by an artist or artisan engaged on the palace. They have no apparent meaning. The calligraphist who wrote them probably had other duties in connexion with the construction, possibly he was a designer of ornamental details, many of which have been found at Kh. Mafjar. It is probable that at the period only monks would have practised this type of calligraphy.

Considering this text in conjunction with the other evidence of Christian labourers at Kh. Mafjar, especially the monograms on No. VII, we may take it for certain that the clerics from the neighbouring monasteries collaborated in the enterprise, placing their skill in ornament and other crafts at the disposal of the Islamic rulers. We need not assume that this represents forced labour. In the first years of the Islamic rule, and later,

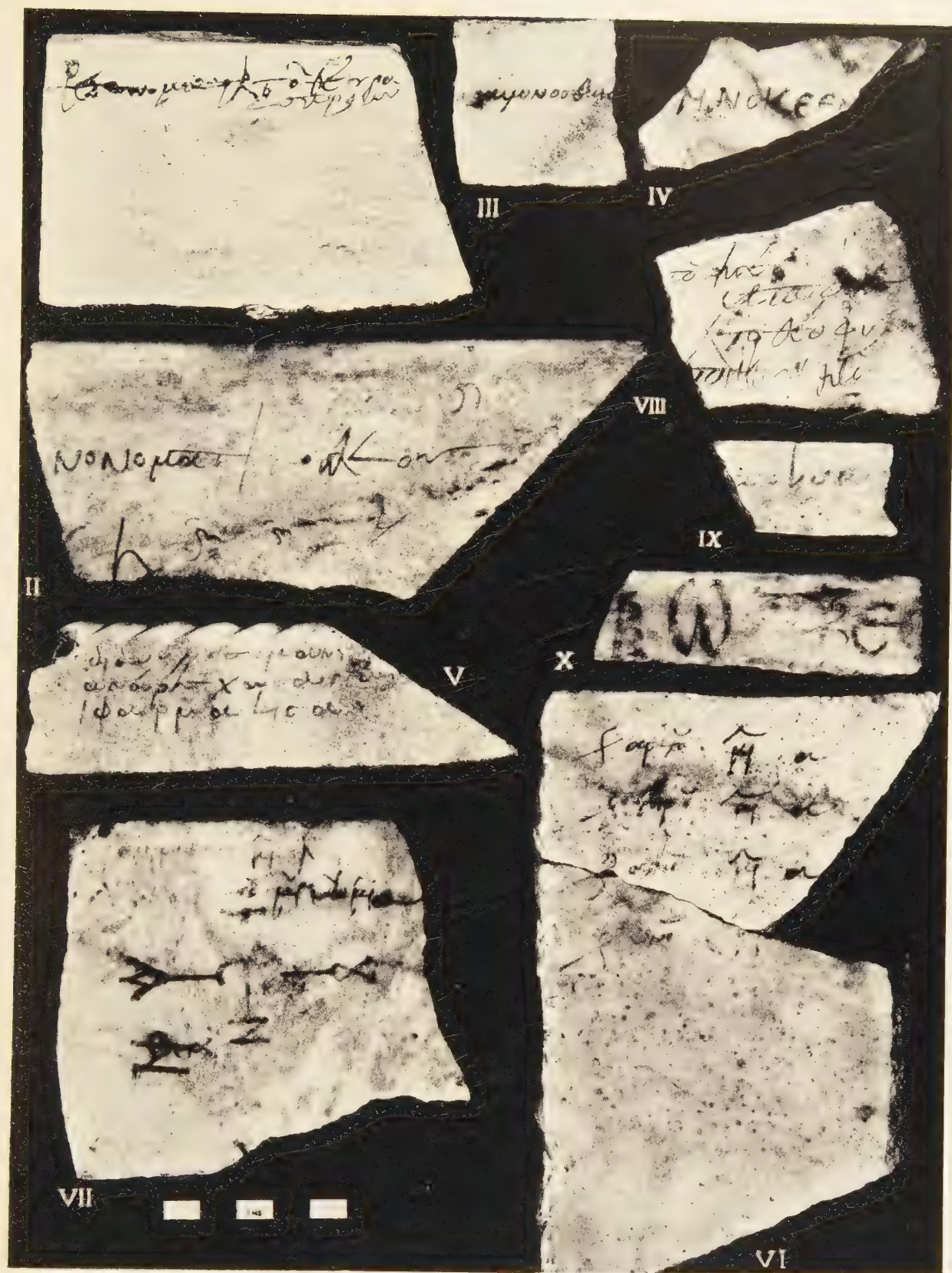
¹ Baramki, *QDAP*, V, p. 136: 'The iron nails were probably used for securing the roof timbers.'

² Cf. Thompson, *Introd. to Gr. and Lat. Palaeogr.*, p. 213, Facs. 49; a manuscript of the Psalms has a similar character with a combination in the same letter of very heavy and very light strokes; its date is 862. We should also compare *ibid.*, p. 215, a Gospel MS. of 949, and the enumeration of similar manuscripts, *ibid.*, p. 214, No. 50; p. 216, No. 51.

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there is evidence of the continued tranquillity enjoyed by Byzantine Christians, with their churches and monasteries, at Nessana—'Auja el Hafir (cf. my article on a transmission document found amongst the Nessana papyri, *Sefer Magnes*, p. 224). Here we have further testimony of the harmonious collaboration of both religions and cultures in Palestine.

M. SCHWABE.



KHIRBAT MAFJAR
Greek inscribed fragments



View of Tell Abu Sultān

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR

Note: Nos. 1 and 2 are on scale of No. 4. All other objects on scale shown near No. 21

A MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB AT EL-JISR

DURING 1940 a rock-cut tomb containing deposits of the Middle Bronze Age was discovered at el-Jisr in the Wadi Rubin, 14 kilometres south of Jaffa. In addition, some objects forming part of the furniture of two more graves were retrieved, the graves

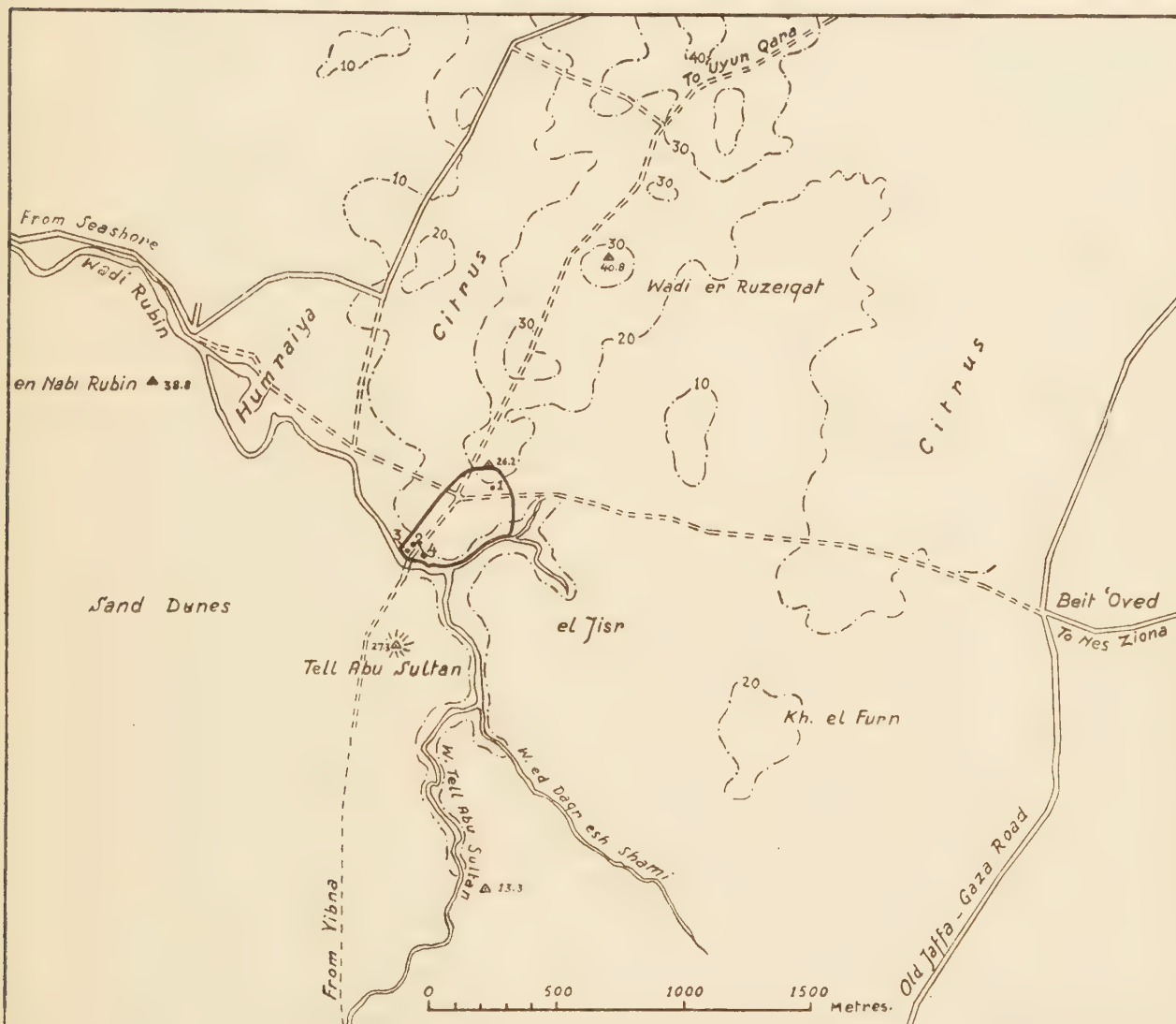


FIG. 1. el-Jisr, Map of vicinity

The thick black line encloses the necropolis area. 1=Tomb excavated in 1940. 2, 3=Graves destroyed previously. 4=Tomb excavated in 1925

themselves having allegedly been destroyed soon after their finding. These discoveries, together with burials discovered in the vicinity in 1925,¹ demonstrate the existence of an

¹ L. A. Mayer, 'A Bronze Age deposit from a cave near Nebi Rubin', in *Palestine Museum Bulletin*, No. 2, pp. 2 ff. (4 on map, Fig. 1).

extensive cemetery on this site. The material accompanying the burials further implies the existence of a prosperous settlement in the neighbourhood at this period. Such a settlement may be reasonably sought in the artificial mound called Tell Abu Sultān which lies in the sand-dunes only 200 metres away to the south¹ (Pl. XII, below).

El-Jisr, meaning 'the bridge', is the name applied to rocky ground situated by a ford on the north bank of the Rubin river. Formerly there may have existed a bridge at the place of the present ford, of which, however, all traces have since completely disappeared. The ground, extensively quarried near the bank, rises directly from the river bed and then slopes down gently northward to the Nabi Rubin track which runs east and west from the old Jaffa-Gaza road across a tract of marshy ground to the shrine of en Nebi Rubin and the sea-shore. Along the west side another track running north and south leads across the ford by the mound of Tell Abu Sultān in the direction of Yibna (Fig. 1).

The rock-cut tomb was about 15 metres to the north of the Nabi Rubin track (1 on plan, Fig. 1); the two graves were discovered close to the ford near the western edge of the track leading northward from Yibna to 'Uyūn Qara (2, 3 on plan, Fig. 1).

A. THE TOMB. (See plan and section, Fig. 2)

The tomb was approached by a flight of ten steps leading down through the entrance to the floor of Chamber I. The sandstone slab which blocked the entrance to the tomb was placed on the tread of the seventh step, and there was a shelf in the east wall of the staircase level with the fourth step. The method of hewing the tomb entrance was evidently as follows: At the outset a roughly rectangular shaft about 2.20 m. (east and west) by 1.60 m. (north and south) was excavated to a depth of about 1.50 m. from the surface. The area of the shaft was then reduced leaving a shelf on the left side. The cutters then continued downwards with a flight of three steps immediately in front of the entrance, the steps extending the full width of the reduced shaft. The first three narrower steps appear to be a subsequent addition. Chamber I communicated with a second chamber (II) through a door which also was blocked with a sandstone slab.

Chamber I had originally served as a vestibule to Chamber II, and at the closure of the latter had been converted into a burial chamber, which was successively widened to meet subsequent needs. Traces of such widening were evident in the rock wall of the chamber. This chamber was irregularly hewn, as compared with Chamber II, owing to the softness of the rock stratum in which it was cut. It had a maximum width of 3.50 m. (east-west) by 3.20 m. (north-south) measuring at ground-level to the base of the stairs, and had a maximum height of 1.90 m. In addition to a group of pottery this chamber yielded jewellery, scarabs, a complete ostrich egg-shell, alabaster vases, a basalt mortar, bronze daggers, and various small objects. The chamber was found packed with drift-sand to the top. The drift must have come in through the gap between the slab and entrance wall, as there was no crevice in the roof. When the slab from the door connecting the two chambers was removed, some of the sand fell on to the clean floor of Chamber II. From this glissade were picked up three alabaster (Nos. 34-6 in the catalogue below), as well as a round lump of a greyish-white damp substance, having a hard crust, possibly

¹ See note on Tell Abu Sultān at end of this report, p. 42.

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR

of limestone, *c.* 2 mm. thick.¹ The lump proved to contain a kind of resin, possibly turpentine,² which was probably deposited in the tomb for a ritual purpose.³ The position of these objects indicates that a burial had lain immediately against the door-slab. The chamber contained no stratified deposit and did not appear to have been crowded

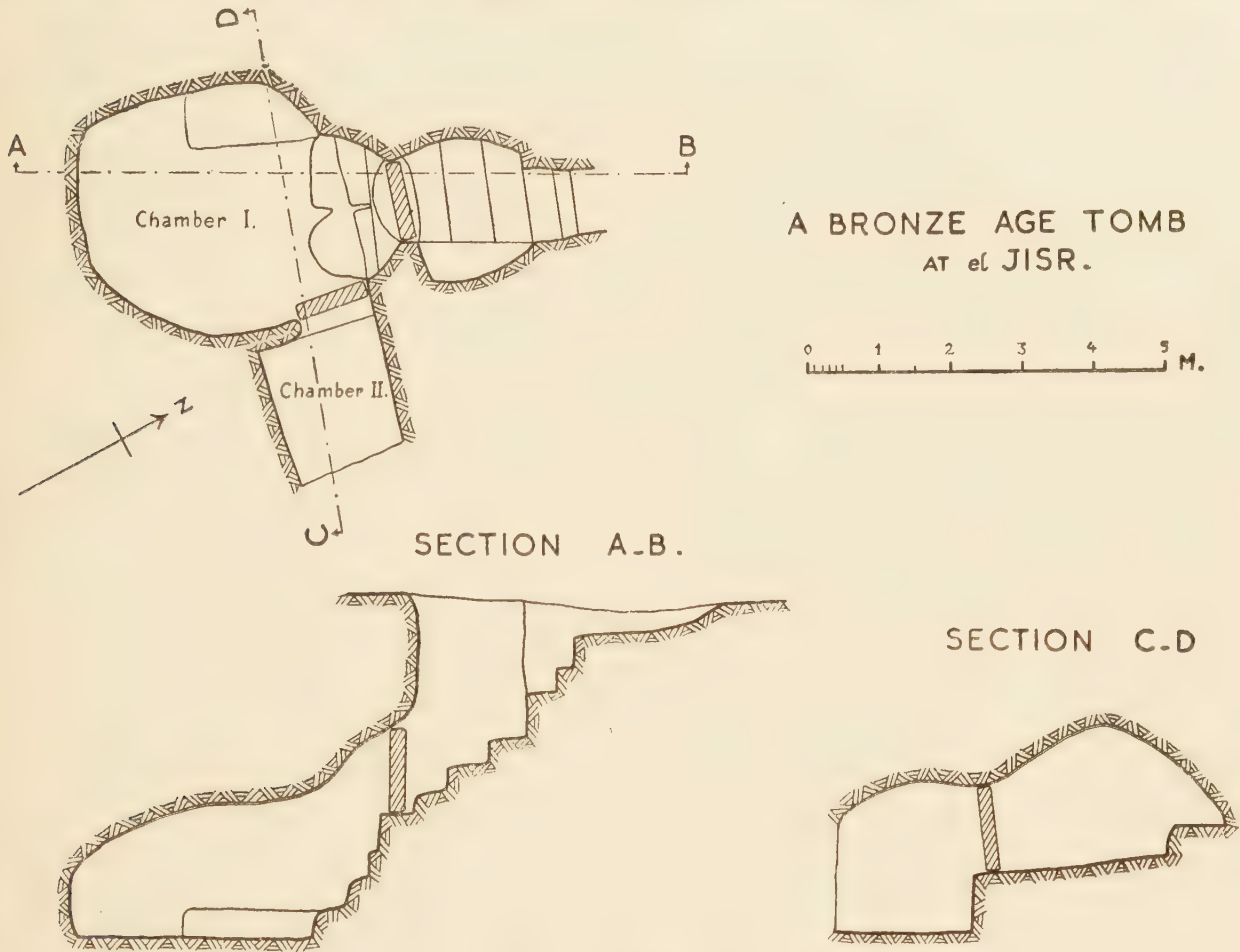


FIG. 2. Plan and Sections

with burials. No trace of any deposit at all was found in the south-west corner. The number of burials in the chamber may be estimated at five to seven, judging mainly from the disposition of the pottery and other objects in groups. Two groups in the south-eastern part may have belonged to a single burial. The human remains were so much decayed that their position could hardly be recorded. Fragments of a human skull and other bones were, however, discovered on sifting. The animal bones were slightly better preserved. They represented remains of ox, camel, and sheep.⁴

Chamber II measured 1.60 m. (north-south) by 1.90 m. (east-west). It was 1.50 m.

¹ No. 58 in Catalogue. May it represent the remains of a decomposed alabaster jug in which the resin was placed?

² I have to thank Dr. I. Menshikovsky of Tel-Aviv for first identifying it as turpentine.

³ Cf. A. Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, p. 265.

⁴ I am indebted to Dr. M. Stekelis for kindly examining the bones from this tomb.

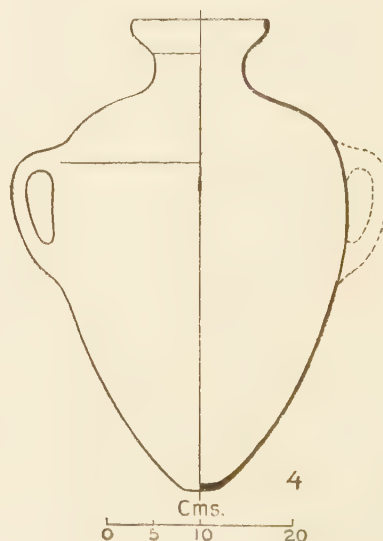
high at the east side and rose to 2.10 m. at the west wall. The door leading to Chamber II was cut in the end of the latter wall, 80 cm. above the floor and was about 1.15 m. square. It was found blocked by a slab of corresponding size, 15–20 cm. thick. The east wall of Chamber I was pierced by quarrymen engaged on tunnelling the rock. The contents of the chamber were thus found disturbed. The red slip dipper juglet was the only piece which appeared to be in its position (No. 14 in catalogue). On sifting, the earth from the floor of the chamber yielded broken pottery sherds, fragments of alabaster vessels, fragments of ostrich eggs, remains of decayed human and animal bones, fragments of a bronze dagger with rivets, and lastly a collection of flat ivory pieces. These remains show that the burials were originally fully furnished. The pottery remains were typical of the Middle Bronze Age and included fragments of the black button-base ware, some with punctured decoration. The discovery of the interesting ivory group lends particular importance to this tomb.

CHAMBER I

LIST OF FINDS

Jars and Amphorae

1. Jar. Brown ware mixed with lime grits. Collared rim, fine ridge at base of neck. Traces of wheel marks. (42. 311.)¹ (Pl. XII, 1.)
2. Jar. Brownish-buff ware. Fine wheel marks all over the body. Short collar neck. (42. 312.) (Pl. XII, 2.)



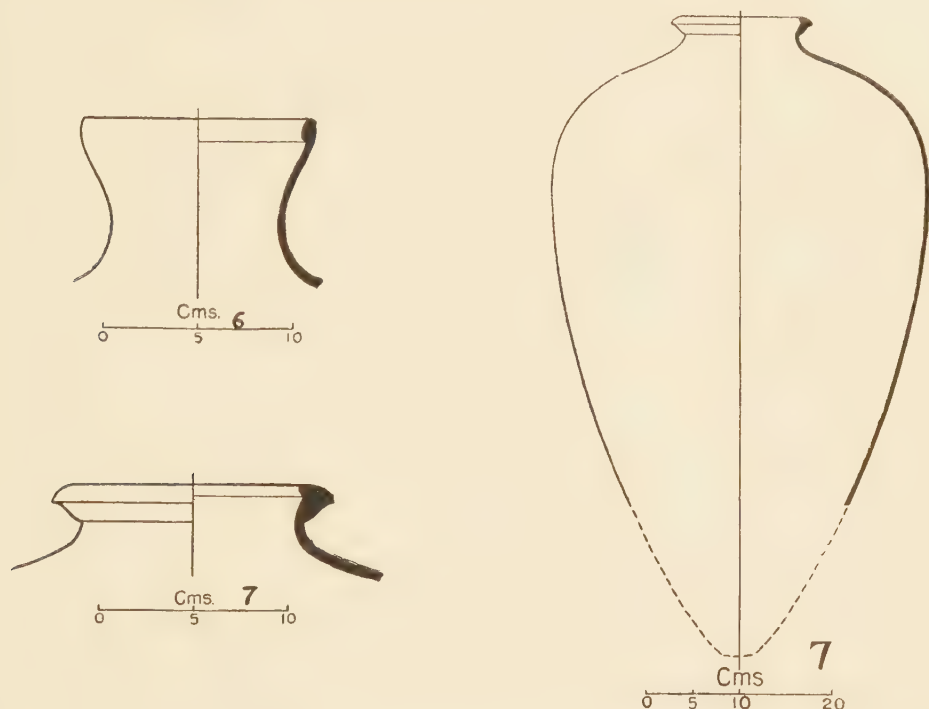
3. Jar. Similar in form and texture to No. 1. Reddish-brown ware. Also comb-faced. Thickness of walls from 10 mm. at base to 6 mm. above.
4. Amphora. Fragmentary. Reddish-brown ware with lime grit, grey in section. Unusually

¹ Numbers in brackets are Palestine Archaeological Museum numbers.

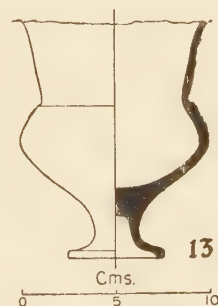
MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR

thin walls, 3-5 mm. thick. Remains of its contents of an ashy-grey colour still adhere to its walls. Small flattish base. Groove round body at base of shoulder level with top of handle. The rim is evidently a later development of the type found in the G and F layers at Tell Beit Mirsim.¹ (42. 313.) (Pl. XII, 4.) Cf. reconstructed drawing on p. 34.

5. Fragmentary jar or amphora (?). Similar to Nos. 1 and 2, but with shorter neck. Rim resembles No. 4.
6. Fragment of amphora neck, lipped inside.
7. Jar like No. 1. Collared rim. 11.4 diam. Reddish ware.



8. Amphora. Lower half only. Flattish base, slightly convex. Reddish-brown ware, grey in section.
 9. Fragmentary jar. Ware as in No. 8. Base slightly convex.
 10. Base of amphora. Gritty reddish-brown ware. Flattish base.
 11. Amphora. Reddish-buff ware with traces of a bright red slip and vertical burnishing. Small flattish base. Two grooves at base of shoulder. 30.4 cm. ht., 10 cm. diam. of rim. (42. 288.) (Pl. XII, 11.)
 12. Jug. Gritty brownish ware. Fine ridge below rim, mid-rib on handle, slightly convex base. (42. 287.) (Pl. XII, 12.)
 13. Carinated vase, with trumpet-foot. Reddish-buff ware. (42. 318.) (Pl. XII, 13.) Rim damaged.
- Fragments of at least three more amphorae.



Dipper flasks and juglets

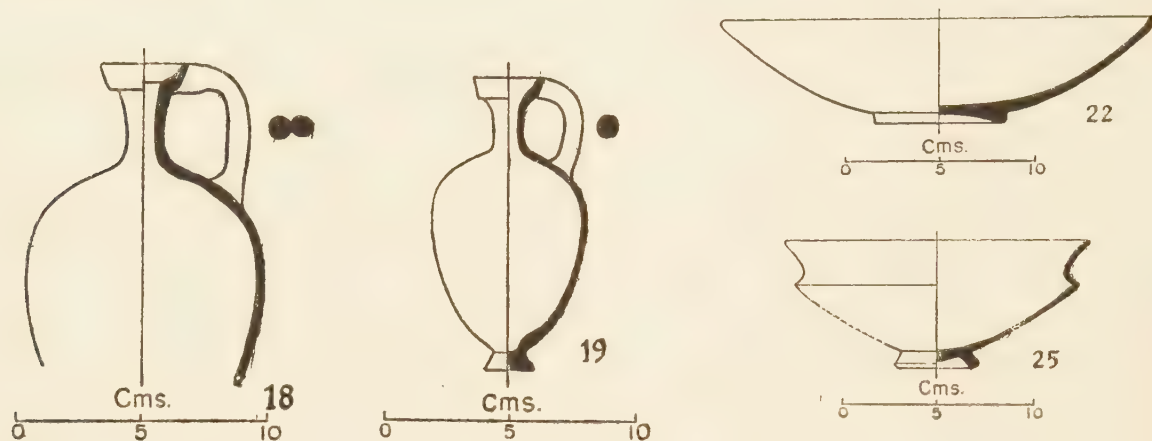
14. Dipper flask. Light brown ware, well levigated. Pointed base, pinched mouth. (42. 289.) (Pl. XII, 14.)
15. Dipper flask, as above. Reddish ware.

¹ Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim* (henceforth abbreviated as *TBM*), I A, p. 70, Pl. 4, No. 13.

16. Dipper flask, as above. Pinkish ware.

Dipper flasks become of general use only during the Middle Bronze Age. They are generally of a well levigated light ware which possibly helped them to keep afloat in liquids inside jars.

17. Juglet. Tell el-Yahudiyeh type. Button base. Double handle. Pinkish-buff ware, dark red slip. (42. 291.) (Pl. XII, 17.)
 18. Juglet. Reddish-buff ware, well levigated. Traces of a red slip. Probably had button base. (42. 315.) Double handle.
 19. Juglet. Fragmentary. Similar to No. 18, with black slip. Single handle. (42. 316.) (Pl. XII, 19.)



20. Fragments of others of similar types.

The juglets are fairly numerous in this chamber and represent types related to the Tell el Yahudiyeh ware. Many of the types are represented, namely juglets with pointed as well as variations of the button base; with black and red slip; single as well as double handles; plain or compressed orifice. Not represented is the characteristic knob on the double handle. These related types appear to be universally common in the latter half of the period. (Ras el-Ain, Tell Beit Mirsim, and elsewhere.) These wares in distinction of the true Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware have probably been locally made, as they appear to be of widespread use. True Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware, e.g. the black slip juglet with punctured decoration, is represented only by two specimens in Chamber II.

Bowls

The carinated type is fairly represented, but they lack the bright slip and other characteristics of technique attributed to the earlier part of the period.

21. Bowl. Carinated. 15.8 cm. diam., 7.4 cm. ht. Reddish-brown ware and slip. Concave disk base (42. 290.) (Pl. XII, 21.)
 22. Bowl. Fragmentary. Concave disk base as in No. 21. Reddish-brown ware, grey in section.
 23. Bowl, fragment. c. 13 cm. diam. Ring base, reddish-brown ware, grey in section.
 24. Fragment of carinated bowl. Reddish-buff, well levigated ware. Roughly comb-faced over upper part.
 25. Bowl, sharply carinated. Thin walls. Ware, reddish-buff, metallic. (42. 314.)
 26. Fragment of bowl with disk base, comb-faced.
 27. Fragment of carinated bowl. Ring base with knob in middle.

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR

28. Fragment of carinated bowl.
29. Bowl, reddish-brown ware. Disk base.

Small fragments of other bowls.

Alabaster

30. Bottle. 14.7 cm. ht. Upright form. (42. 296.) (Pl. XIII, 30.)
31. Bottle. 12.3 cm. Upright form. (Pl. XIII, 31.)
32. Bottle. 10.5 cm. Upright form. (Pl. XIII, 32.)
33. Bottle. 10 cm. Upright form. (42. 294.) (Pl. XIII, 33.)
34. Bottle. 8.7 cm. Squat form. (42. 292.) (Pl. XIII, 34.)
35. Bottle. 6.7 cm. Squat form. (Pl. XIII, 35.)
36. Bottle. 7.3 cm. Squat form. Tiny flattish base. (42. 293.) (Pl. XIII, 36.)
37. Bottle. 12.7 cm. Squat form. Roundish base tending to a point. Three grooves on rim. (42. 295.) (Pl. XIII, 37.)
38. Rim similar to that of No. 37, but more upright.

For near parallels compare Albright, *TBM*, I A, p. 82, Fig. 2, from E stratum, and Pl. 15, Nos. 16 and 17 in D stratum. For discussion of types see *TBM*, I, p. 28; II, p. 82.

For comparison of shapes see large collection in Petrie, *Ancient Gaza*, IV, Pls. XXXVIII, XXXIX.

Stone objects

39. Rim of diorite vase, 4.2 cm. diam. Similar in shape to Nos. 37 and 38.
40. Mortar. 19.5 cm. diam., 8.5 cm. ht. (42. 297.) (Pl. XII, 40.)
41. Pestle. 4.3 cm. ht. (42. 298.) (Pl. XII, 41.)

For similar mortars, cf. Albright, *TBM*, II, Pl. 38, Fig. 39; Petrie, *Ancient Gaza*, IV, Pl. XL.

Jewellery

42. Gold ring set with plain crystal scaraboid. It is made of two thin strips of gold outwardly grooved to give the appearance of four wires, ending in two spirals at each end of the bezel. The gold has a slightly tarnished appearance. (42. 299.) (Pl. XIII, 42.)
43. Toggle-pin, bronze. 11 cm. long. Tip missing. Regularly twisted. Compare *QDAP*, VI, Type 8c β. (42. 300.) (Pl. XIII, 43.)
44. Tiny bronze fragment of toggle-pin, 2.8 cm. long.
45. Silver pin. 8.7 cm. long. (42. 301.) (Pl. XIII, 45.)
46. Silver pin in two fragments. 8.2 cm. long, tip broken.
47. Ring-swivel, silver. (42. 302.) (Pl. XIII, 47.)
48. Ring-swivel, silver. Crescent shape, tips chipped off. (Pl. XIII, 48.)

Weapons

49. Dagger, bronze, 19 cm. long. Plain blade. (42. 308.) (Pl. XIII, 49.)
50. Dagger, bronze, 15.9 cm. long. Plain blade. (42. 309.) (Pl. XIII, 50.)
51. Dagger, with curving tip. 18.2 cm. long. Bronze. (42. 310.) (Pl. XIII, 51.)

Scarabs¹

52. White paste. Falcon between two uraei. (42. 307.) (Pl. XIII, 52.)
53. Green jasper. ♀ *Ankh*-emblem of 'life'. (42. 305.) (Pl. XIII, 53.)

¹ I have to thank Mr. Alan Rowe, Director of the Musée Gréco-Romain, Alexandria, for having kindly identified the scarabs.

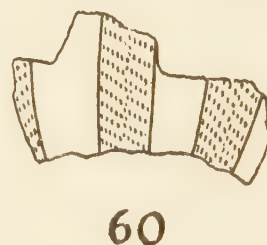
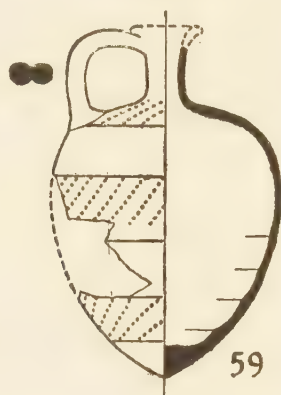
54. Steatite. Scroll border. 𓏏 (?) *ny-nefer*, perhaps 'belongs beauty' or 'good luck' (to the wearer). [Or even a proper name, *Ny-nefer*.] (42. 306.) (Pl. XIII, 54.)
 55. Amethyst. 𓏏 𓏏 𓏏 *nefer nub ankh*, 'good luck (or 'beauty'), gold, and life' [to the wearer], within scroll border. (42. 304.) (Pl. XIII, 55.)
 56. Amethyst, plain. (42. 303.) (Pl. XIII, 56.)

Varia

57. Ostrich egg-shell. 15.5 cm.
 58. Resinous substance, turpentine. Cf. p. 33, n. 2.

CHAMBER II

59. Juglet. Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware. Black slip. Three registers of punctured decoration on body. (42. 271.) (Pl. XII, 59.)
 60. Fragments of similar juglet. Vertical strips with notched decoration on body.



61. Dipper flask with dark red slip, vertically burnished. Base missing. Ware reddish-brown, well levigated. (42. 270.) (Pl. XII, 61.)
 62. Fragments, related to Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware.
 63. Fragments of bowls, some carinated and face-combed. No slip. The burnishing of bowls is uncommon in the later phase of the period and disappears in L.B.
 64. Fragments of jars and amphorae. Some rims resemble No. 4 in Chamber I.
 65. Fragment of trumpet-foot of carinated vase, reddish-buff ware, white grits.
 66. Mortar. Basalt.
 67. Diorite fragment of small-footed vase.
 68. Tiny fragments of alabaster vases and of ostrich egg-shells.

*Catalogue of Ivories (Plate XIV)**Human figures*

69. Figurine of nobleman wearing plain necklace and clad in short Egyptian ceremonial kilt with tail. Left hand probably held staff. Right arm raised, with fingers extended, in attitude of reverence. Hair shown by punctuating. (42. 272.)
 70. Figurine of man, clad in folded kilt extending in front in a triangular projection, and with wide band hanging down from knot in middle. Right arm held downwards with fingers extended. Left hand missing; probably held an object, possibly flail. (Cf. No. 72.) Legs are marked with vertical line ending in loop as in Fig. 69. Head missing (42. 273.)

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR

71. Figurine of lady (?), lower part broken at back, but complete in front; top of head-dress tentatively joined. Clad in long garment held by girdle above waist, and wearing necklace. The girdle is marked by wide band with incised parallel vertical strokes. Right arm held downwards. Left hand held to her breast. (42. 274.)
72. Fragment of curved object, possibly flail. (42. 286.)
73. Fragment of forearm with clenched fist. (42. 286.)
74. Fragment of hand. (42. 286.)
75. Fragment of human (?) figurine. (42. 286.)

Animals, Birds, and Fish

76. Animal figurine, probably lion. Head of animal resting on paw. Band dividing head from body extended to end of muzzle, which is broken. Mane marked by horizontal incisions with band border extending from brow to nape, slightly chipped. The shaggy part of the body marked by short hatching. The hind-quarters were evidently bare. A few accidental scratches on the back. (42. 276.)
77. Fragment of animal tail, perhaps belonging to No. 76. (42. 276.)
78. Lion head looking to right. Complete. Whiskers at muzzle marked by pricking (punctures). Traces of paint (?). (42. 279.)
79. Lion head looking to left. Similar to No. 78. Muzzle missing. (42. 278.)
80. Lion head looking left. Similar and of same size as Nos. 78 and 79. Evidently duplicates. (42. 277.)
81. Figurine of horse (?). Hind-quarters missing as well as forelegs. Mane marked by band decorated with alternate vertical and horizontal strokes in header-stretcher form. The curved line dividing the head from neck is also decorated with parallel strokes. (42. 275.)
82. Probably figurine of horse. (42. 280.)
83. Fragment of cow figurine (hind-quarters). Weathered to brownish colour. (42. 286.)
84. Fragment of cow figurine (hind-quarters). (42. 286.)
85. Cow figurine. Hind-quarters missing. (42. 281.)
86. Head of cow figurine. (Fragment.) (42. 286.)
87. Fragment of animal figurine. (42. 286.)
88. Figurine of bird looking right. Legs missing. (42. 282.)
89. Figurine of bird (hawk?), looking right. Legs and plumage below figure probably belong to it. The whole figurine thus appears to have been originally made of two separate pieces, ultimately stuck together, as each shows a flat edge. (42. 283.)
90. Bird figurine.
91. Part of bird figurine. (42. 285.)
92. Part of bird figurine.

Varia

93. Lion's hind leg (?). (42. 286.)
- 94-104. Miscellaneous fragments. (42. 286.)

The Ivories

In style and execution the present ivories are Egypto-Canaanite and were no doubt made by a local artist. The prominence of Egyptian influence in these ivories is in harmony both with the style in vogue at the period to which they belong and with the other objects from this tomb. On the other hand, the treatment of certain pieces, notably the attitude of the 'lady' in the long dress and turban tentatively added to it, are not entirely Egyptian in character and may rather be Asiatic.

The uniform quality and thickness of the ivory employed, i.e. 3.5 mm., alike suggests

that the bulk of the collection was originally designed as the decoration of one or more of the sides of a casket or some similar object.¹ Some border pieces have dowel-holes, and the other pieces must have been glued to the casket face. That they were so attached is borne out by the occurrence of figures formed of two or more pieces separately cut and fitted together. (Cf., e.g., No. 89 composed of two separate parts.) In such cases the edges are smooth and give a misleading appearance of completeness. This explains a number of pieces of unidentified or deficient form, which no doubt formed part of more complex designs; some pieces have exact duplicates (Nos. 79 and 80), while others are approximate copies of a single model, being nearly equal in shape and size (Nos. 88 and 89). This suggests that the whole group is the creation of one artist.

The motives represent both human and animal figures, but are drawn chiefly from the animal world. Single ivory pieces from this period representing animals are also known from Gezer,² Tell el-'Ajjul,³ Tell Beit Mirsim,⁴ and Megiddo.⁵ Our motives include one female and two male figures. The male figures wear typical Egyptian kilts. No. 76 probably represents a lion, perhaps shown as accompanying a male figure. Of particular interest are Nos. 81 and 82 which may be identified with the horse, judging both from the general outline of the heads and in particular from the treatment of the mane, which accords with the later representations of the manes of horses in Assyrian and Greek art. The Hyksos are known to have been the first to introduce the horse into Egypt, hence its appearance in this group is quite consistent with the dating of the tomb to the Hyksos period as inferred on other grounds.

B. THE DATE OF THE TOMB

The dating of this tomb seems to be of special interest in view of the ivory group which it contained. Comparison of the main pottery types from this tomb with stratified deposits of the Middle Bronze Age II at Tell Beit Mirsim suggests a date late in the Hyksos period. The pottery also compares closely with pottery from the upper layers at Tell Ras el 'Ain.⁶

The scarabs were examined by Mr. Alan Rowe and dated by him to the Middle Kingdom; they do not, however, offer an exact criterion of date, for early scarabs are of common occurrence in later tombs, and scarabs of Hyksos type were made till late in the XVIIIth Dynasty.⁷

The tomb is of importance, however, in that it points to the occupation of the site at that early date, an inference which is confirmed by other graves in this cemetery. The amethyst scarab (No. 55) engraved with Nefer-Nub-Ankh, as well as No. 54, may represent private names, but more probably they are meant to express a wish.⁸

The Egyptian alabastra from the tomb display a variety of shapes of the XIIth Dynasty

¹ Cf. Albright, *TBM*, II, pp. 49-51, for a full discussion of the problem of M.B. ivories.

² Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, II, Fig. 398.

³ Petrie, *Ancient Gaza*, I, Pl. XXIII.

⁴ *TBM*, II, Pls. 33-7.

⁵ P.A.M. No. 38. 947 (unpublished).

⁶ 'Excavations at Ras el 'Ain II', *QDAP*, VI, pp. 100 ff.

⁷ Guy, *Megiddo Tombs*, p. 185.

⁸ Guy, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

and earlier,¹ but which in Palestine continue well into the Middle Bronze Age.² Finally, the practice of placing ostrich egg-shells in tombs seems to have been customary at that time, e.g. in Jericho (Tomb 9), Tell Duweir (Tomb 1502), and Tell el-'Ajjul (Grave 1717).³

Returning to the pottery as the principal criterion for dating the tomb, there can be no question that it belongs as a whole to the Middle Bronze period. It remains to consider how far it is possible to narrow down the limits to which the pottery, and with it the ivories, can be assigned. The distinctive features of the Middle Bronze pottery, abruptly introduced at the beginning of the period, relate both to shape and technique. As regards technique there was the widespread use of the wheel, improved levigation of ware, and above all the application of fine slip, burnish, and face-combing. But while in technique the initiators of this pottery could learn from their predecessors, in form and shape they developed qualities which have never been excelled. Outstanding features introduced include the small flattish, slightly convex, base; the ring and disk forms of base; the pointed and button bases for the juglets; the carinated form, chiefly for bowls, but also for vases at a subsequent stage in the period; and finally, the typical loop handle of the amphoras. To this period, in fact, belong the finest forms encountered in ancient Palestinian pottery. The pottery, however, degenerates towards the end of the period, and it is in relation to this process that the pottery from our tomb can be more precisely dated. In fact, both as regards technique and form, it is to the end of the period that it must be assigned. The jar rims, for example, which at Tell Beit Mirsim are characteristic of the earlier phase of the period only⁴ and occur in no other strata, should be compared with the more developed rims from this tomb (Nos. 4 and 5 in catalogue). Equally notable is the lack of a slip and burnish on the carinated bowls in our tomb as in the last (D) stratum of the Middle Bronze Age at Tell Beit Mirsim. The burnishing of this kind of bowl disappears completely in the Late Bronze Age. The tomb may therefore be dated to the end of the Middle Bronze Age or to the seventeenth to sixteenth century B.C.

C. THE GRAVES (2 and 3 on map, Fig. 1, p. 31)

The two graves which were not excavated by us were discovered in a garden near the ford in course of hoeing the soil. They were found 50 cm. below the surface and appear to have been destroyed soon after their finding. The objects recovered were, later, handed over to the writer. They comprised three bronze daggers as well as the fragments of a hole-mouth jar. Among these fragments were evident a flat base and a ledge handle. The objects, it was gathered, represented the furniture of two graves, differently orientated, each grave accommodating a single burial in a shallow receptacle hewn out of the kurkar bed. Two daggers and the jar were alleged to come from one grave, the third dagger from the other.

¹ Petrie, *Stone and Metal Vases*, Pl. XXIX, Nos. 656-9.

² Petrie, *Ancient Gaza*, I, Pl. XXV; Albright, *TBM*, I A, p. 82, Fig. 2.

³ Ostrich eggs were, however, found as late as in the Iron Age II period, viz. with cremated burials at Reqeish (as yet unpublished). The Syrian ostrich (*Struthio Syriacus*, Hebrew: *Bath hayya'amāh*, Arabic: *Na'āma*, was still known in the southern desert as late as 1929, but seems to have disappeared by now. Cf. B. Maisler and S. Yeivin, *Palestine Guide*, p. 64.

⁴ Cf. Albright, *TBM*, I A, p. 70, Pl. 4, No. 13; and Pl. 22, Nos. 16-17, 20-2.

List of Objects from the Graves

1. Dagger, bronze.
2. Dagger, bronze. (Cf. Petrie, *Anc. Gaza*, II, Pl. IX, Nos. 47, 49.)
3. Dagger, bronze. Flat, with slight midrib.
4. Fragments of hole-mouth jar. Pinkish-red ware. Degenerate pushed-up ledge handles.
(Cf. Petrie, *Anc. Gaza*, II, Pl. XIX, Nos. 30-4.)

The graves represent an earlier occupation and appear to date from the transition period of the Early to the Middle Bronze Age. As such they offer special interest, reflecting as they do on the relationship between the older culture and the newly introduced civilization of the Hyksos age.

RELATION WITH TELL ABU SULTĀN (cf. Fig. 1, p. 31)

Tell Abu Sultān, to which the tombs may be related, is a prominent mound of considerable size (Pl. XII, below) which, owing to the circumstance that it lies amidst the sand-dunes, has for long escaped attention. Both the slopes and the flat top are covered with blown sand which hides any surface remains. A collection of pottery, however, has been made, chiefly from the south slope, where a strip of ground is periodically cultivated and the sherds turn up in ploughing. The pottery is predominantly of the Bronze Age and agrees well with the pottery from the necropolis. The steep gradients of the sides of the mound suggest the existence of a glacis, a common feature of Hyksos sites. As regards its period of occupation the mound may be tentatively classed with Tell el-'Ajjul, Ras el 'Ain, &c.

The track which led across the ford to the mound represents an ancient road. South of the mound the track has been obliterated by the advancing sand-dunes. It led from Yibna where the ancient coast road evidently formed two branches, one following the course of the old Jaffa-Gaza road, past Beit-'Oved¹ (a Bronze Age site), and the other passing Tell Abu Sultān, to rejoin the second near 'Uyūn Qara.²

The limestone fragment published by Rowe³ which was engraved with hieroglyphs of an unknown king, probably of Hyksos or earlier date, was found by the writer at Kh. Duheisha. It may originate from Tell Abu Sultān, as both sites lie in the lands of the same village, el Qubeiba.

Another Middle Bronze Age necropolis in the close neighbourhood of Tell Abu Sultān has been found at Humraiya, a low hill covered with red alluvial soil on the north bank of the Rubin opposite the shrine of en Nabi Rubin, a report of which will be published at a later date.

J. ORY.

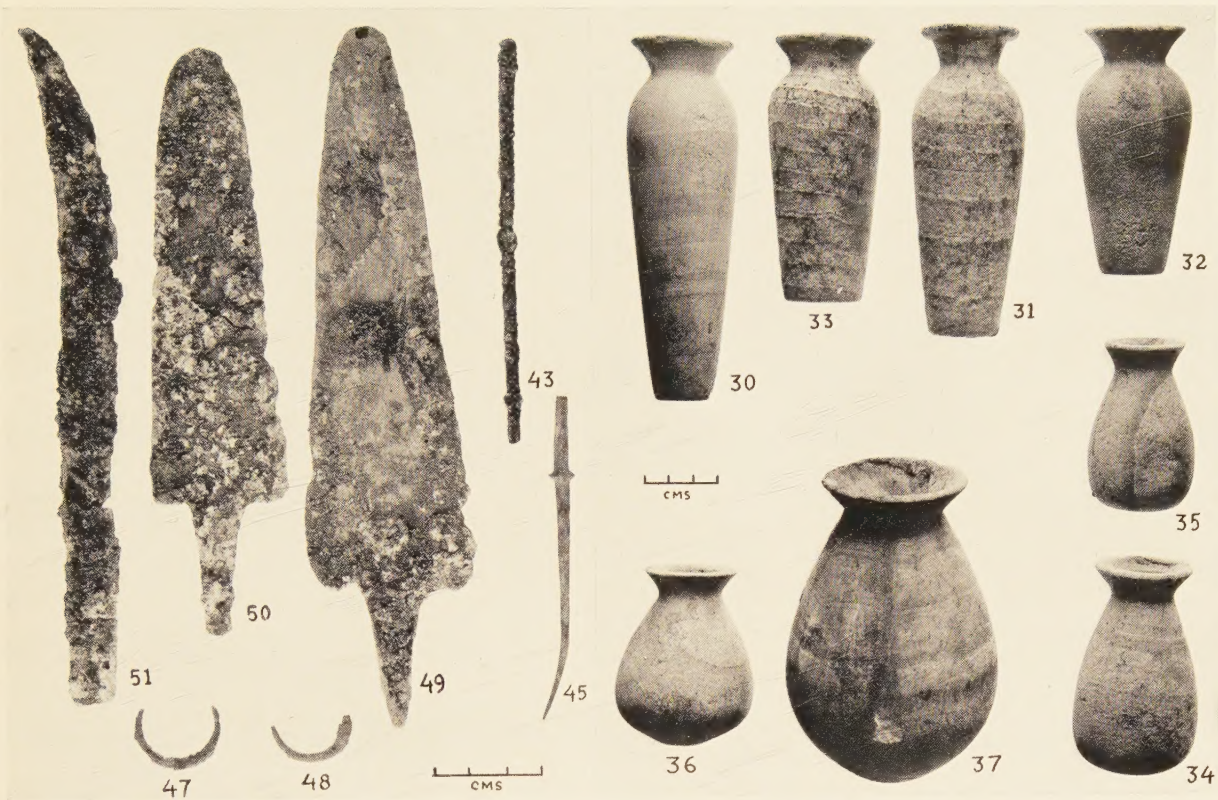
¹ Kh. Lulieh on P.E.F. map sheet XVII. (A Middle Bronze Age grave was excavated in 1925, to the north-east of this site in the land of Nes Ziona, cf. *Pal. Mus. Bulletin*, No. 2, p. 10.)

² The name el-Jisr, 'the bridge', which still lingers at the site of the ford across the Rubin, points also to the antiquity of this track, although no traces of any bridge are at present evident.

³ Rowe, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 293, Pl. XXXVI.

1

2



1. Metal objects

2. Alabastra



3. Scarabs and ring

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR



MIDDLE BRONZE AGE TOMB, EL-JISR
Ivories from Chamber II

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